

Cease Firing

LIVE · TO · LEARN · AND · LEARN · TO · LIVE



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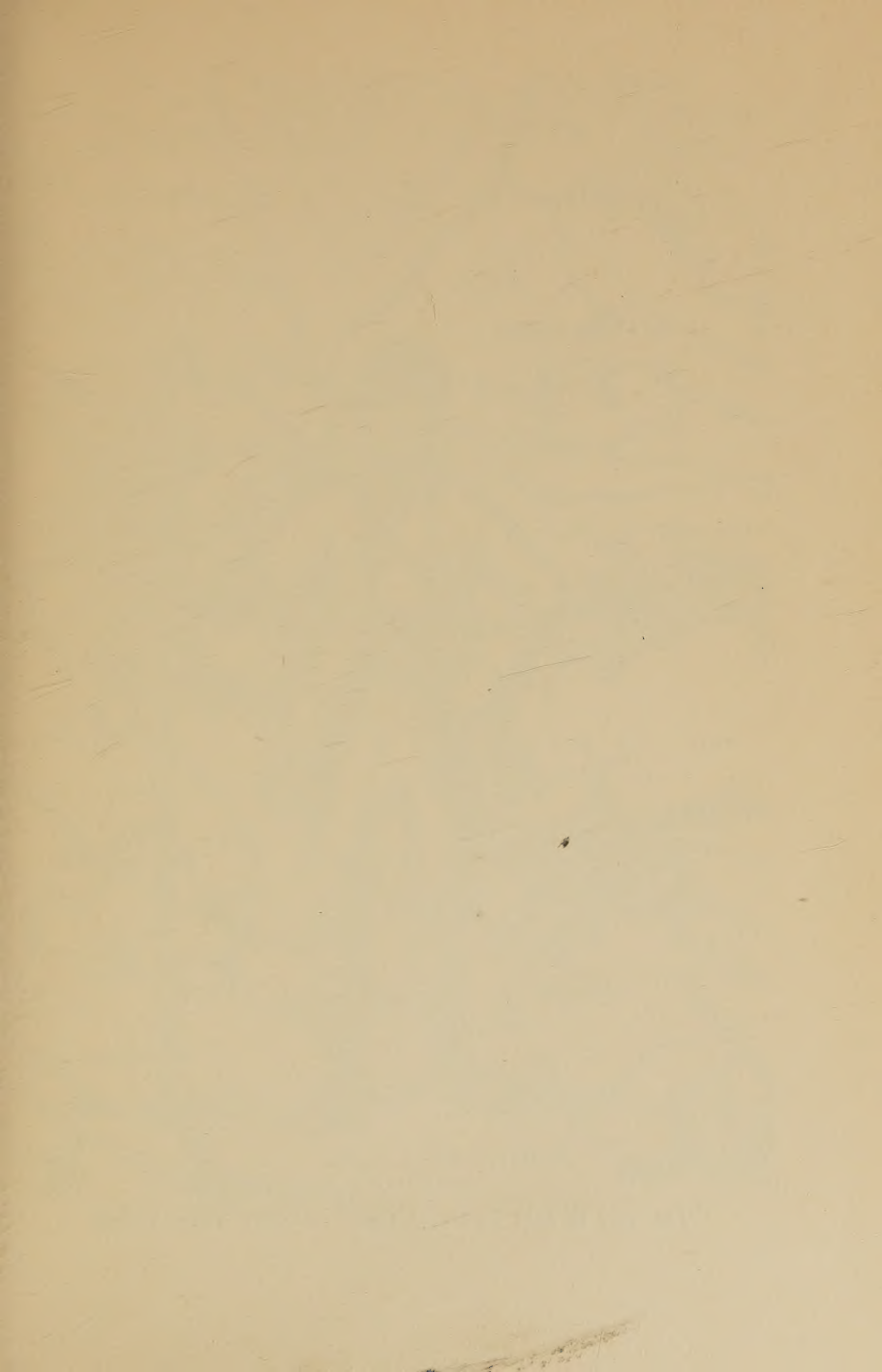
CEASE FIRING



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"I'm here to take care of things!" — From Cease Firing.

CEASE FIRING AND OTHER STORIES

By

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Illustrated by

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INTRODUCTION

A SKILLFUL instructor knows that in order to be a successful teacher he must start with what his pupil knows to go to the unknown; he must commence with something simple to arrive at the complex; he must take something near at hand properly to explain the remote; and only by a concrete illustration can he clarify an abstract idea.

It is for these reasons that the important concepts of international relations are difficult to teach, hard to comprehend and easy to misunderstand. Such terms as international relations, league of nations, outlawry of war, mandates, disarmament, neutrality, conciliation, arbitration and coöperation lie in the realm of the complex and abstract, the remote and the unknown. To the unlearned and the untraveled such terms are apt to be misty and beclouded, objects for sentimentality or dread, pride or prejudice as the case may be.

These stories deal with international problems; and as a good teacher should, they start with known, simple, concrete and near illustrations of the ideals that most of us hope to see more widely adopted in this world of ours. It is our hope that clearer understanding of present practices and future possibilities will be the result.

WILLIAM F. RUSSELL

Dean of Teachers College
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New York City
April 23, 1929

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BORIS and Alexis stopped suddenly on the mountain trail and listened. Short, sharp barks from rifles somewhere ahead cut the quiet October afternoon . . . two . . . three . . . then a whole volley in answer. The boys stared excitedly at each other, Alexis' sheep entirely forgotten. Why firing in this time of peace? The echoes, thrown back from one brown mountain range to another on their own Bulgarian side of the Bulgarian-Greek frontier, sounded strange and ominous.

The fierce-jowled sheep dog with the boys sniffed up the wind and growled.

"Hoosht-hoosht, Mavro!" exclaimed Alexis to the dog, as another volley let loose the echoes again, and the sheep lifted noses from the wiry green grass.

"It's the frontier guards at Demir-Kapou!" Boris cried suddenly, sweeping a long arm toward the ridge just ahead of them.

"My cousin is the corporal in charge there while the officer is sick!" Alexis replied quickly. "Mavro, watch the sheep!" And the boys were off up the stony little trail.

It took twenty minutes of hot climbing to reach the top

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of the long crest. Here they paused for breath. Just over the ridge ran the quarrel-breeding frontier between Greece and Bulgaria, and this spot was one of about twenty where each country had built on its own side of the border one of the stubborn little blockhouses that guarded the line.

"Sst!" hissed Boris sharply. They dropped flat on their stomachs as still another volley of shots cut the air. A bullet whistled above their heads, to fall harmlessly in a clump of cedars down the slope.

"The sheep!" exclaimed Alexis in an undertone. The boys turned.

"Lucky for us it's on this mountain they're shooting instead of from up above Rupel Pass!" Boris said with quick seriousness, as his eyes swept the line of mountains beyond the peaceful, village-dotted valley at their feet, and rested on the deep gorge where the Struma River cut through the hills on its way south into Greece. "They could plant their guns on those heights, and poof . . ." He stared a moment at the cluster of cottages below that marked his own village of Petritch.

"Rupel Pass! Just let them try it!" Alexis flashed back. "Those Greeks! They've taken enough of our land already!"

As they looked, a lone rifle cracked, and a bullet sank into the caked earth not ten feet from them.

"They've spotted us," Boris said swiftly. "Come!"

Dodging, running and dropping to earth, the boys made the rear door of the blockhouse. A soldier opened it and they stumbled in. Without waiting for them to get their breath, Alexis' cousin Demetri began speaking. "We need you for messengers. Look." He pulled them to a slit in the window blind. They peered through the crack and spied, lying so near the border line that the boys could not tell on which side, the body of one of the Greek sentries.

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"He fired on one of our sentries, who then shot him. Both posts turned out with their arms and the firing began," Demetri explained briefly. "They've tried to get his body which you can see is on our side of the line, and they'll bring up reserves. You and Boris must get this message to our commander in Petritch so that he can telegraph our Ministry of War in Sofia. Also, through the valley you boys can help spread the news of the attack and send up every man who can get away. Tell them they will need rations for three days."

"This is bad business," growled one of the young soldiers with him. "The wind has shifted to the north, and with these warm valleys there will be fog that can cover all enemy moves."

"And our own, too," returned the corporal. But the words were hardly out of his mouth when a fierce volley showered the blockhouse. Boris and Alexis, quivering silently as they marked little spurts of earth kicked up where the bullets hit, fastened their sheepskin coats to the neck, and stood tense, ready for the corporal to open the door.

"Brave work!" they heard one soldier say as they slipped out into the quiet that followed. At top speed they raced to the nearest pincushion of juniper bushes and sprawled flat just in time. Then a second dash . . . a third . . . and they were over the crest and on their way down.

Their news of the fighting on the mountains spread like wildfire. Boris, stopping a moment at the cottage where his startled mother and sister were preparing soup for the evening meal, ran on to the next village . . . ran until his lungs burned and his throat tasted like steel.

Here, too, the villagers flocked excitedly to the public fountain in the market place to find out what the fighting was about. Boris repeated his message, and dropped on to a tree

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stump, breathing hard. In almost no time, a score of swarthy men fell into clumsy march, armed with a queer collection of weapons — the eight rifles allowed the village for defense against brigands, a few old sabers, even pitchforks and scythes. Each man carried a small bundle of bread, cheese, olives, and tobacco. Children trooped along with them for a few rods, mothers cried, and old men began to recount tales of the generations of border quarrels. Boris, still trying to catch his breath, listened.

“There will always be trouble in this valley!” one said, his withered-apple cheeks furrowed into lines of hatred. “First, the Greeks took our farms to the south because we lost to them in the Balkan War. Then, ten years after we had become subjects of Greece so that we could continue to live on these farms, we were told by Greece that we were Bulgarians once more, and we were turned out to let dirty refugees from the east have our clean houses. And where is the money the Greek government promised to give us for our farms when we left them? Well, now we settle here, and here also the Greeks come. Let them try to take our homes from us this time!”

He brandished his gnarled oak staff, and everybody cheered. All but Boris. The boy rose slowly, took a long drink of water, and started back across the fields to his mother’s cottage. He began to wonder why the sentries should be killing each other, anyway. There really must be two sides to the whole question. It was true that if his mother had been paid for her farm in Greece, he could have built her a larger, warmer cottage in Petritch afterwards; he would not have had to try to handle the heavy ox plow by himself after his father’s death, and Alenka would now have strings of gold coins and ornaments as dowry, should she marry. Also, it was true, as the wrinkled old man had implied, that the Greeks might

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come still farther north and capture even Petritch and the other valley towns. But he remembered uncomfortably the pitiful state of the newcomers who had crowded them out of their farms.

Boris, walking wearily back through the fields this October night, remembered, too, something which Schoolmaster Stepanoff had recently told him about the pledge which both countries made when they had joined the League of Nations five years before, not to go to war with each other, but to use friendly methods in settling their disputes, a pledge, the schoolmaster added, to which fifty-five nations had by now bound themselves. Boris had always believed that promises were to be kept. But here, what could Bulgaria do? It looked as if she must defend herself, no matter what promise she had made. Boris' head began to ache with these conflicting thoughts.

Alenka, his tall, pretty sister, was just lifting the pot of onion soup from a small stick fire when he reached home. Briefly he recounted the events to his mother, whose eyes burned with memories as she silently watched him eat. Alenka hovered over him, full of excitement over the affair.

"The colonel of the district is coming!" she informed him. "The men say they will make a stand at Rupel Pass. And to think that you were fired on, Boris!" Her eyes sparkled as she clasped her hands over the scarlet shawl that hung down over her apron. "Tell me everything the corporal said!"

"Boris is tired," interrupted his mother, lighting a second candle.

"If anything happens, I'm here to take care of things, mother," her fourteen-year-old son yawned as he got up stiffly from the stool by the table. "But I think we'll have to break our promise to the League."

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His mother glanced at him swiftly, and came back to where he stood. "Hush, my son!" she said, one hand on his shoulder, her deep eyes resting on his own that looked steadily back at her. "If trouble comes over the mountain again, may the Holy Mary guard us — but above all, may she keep us honorable!" She bent to the forehead nearly on a level with her own, and gave him one of the few kisses he could remember.

The next day news came down the trail that the firing was still going on, that the Bulgarian blockhouse had been captured and retaken, and that the three hundred villagers who had gone up to join the frontier guards were camped behind the cedar trees back of the ridge. Troops began to come in by train to Petritch from the north for reënforcement, and to march down the valley toward the pass.

During the evening the excitement grew less tense. Word had been brought from the blockhouse that, although neither side had been successful in arranging a parley, the firing was dying down. The captain was reported as saying that the affair would probably blow over, anyway. So that night, in a soft southern wind that rustled through the willows by the river, the little towns in the Bulgarian valley slept peacefully.

But not so the colonel in his tent near the pass. Out from the shadow of the mountains slipped the figure of a man who gave the guards the countersign and was admitted into the colonel's tent.

The man saluted the colonel. "Sir, the order from the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been given to the frontier guards at all near-by posts."

The colonel eyed him keenly. "The men understand fully that the ministry has ordered them not to resist?" he snapped.

"Yes, sir," the messenger replied sourly. "Our guards are preparing to fall back if attacked."

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"As to the enemy, did you observe any moves?" asked the colonel.

"Yes, sir. Eighty-four pack mules on the heights east of the pass, sir."

The colonel frowned. "That means mountain artillery," he mused gravely after a moment. Then quickly he wrote something and handed it to the messenger. "This report of further enemy advances is to be telegraphed at once from Petritch to the minister himself," he commanded. "As soon as that is done, continue your observations of the mountain artillery. Report back to me."

The man saluted and slipped silently away.

At dawn, however, the enemy artillery reported itself. At six o'clock Boris was aroused by a terrific explosion that sent him stumbling to the middle of the room. Alenka rushed out with a shawl around her and her brown eyes wide with fright.

"What was it, Boris?" she gasped.

"It is the enemy cannon," came her mother's voice, calm but tense. "Boris, fasten the stakes that hold the oxen, so that they cannot run. Alenka, dress."

Other shells fell near by.

"Mother!" shouted Boris as he ran back to the house. "They are firing on the whole valley. You and Alenka cannot stay!"

Boris' mother made up her mind. "Boris, yoke the oxen and put bedding and food in the cart. Alenka, you are to come with me. We can be of no use here."

Half an hour later two laden ox-carts, and many others like them, not only from Petritch, were headed northward, away from the exploding shells.

The next day, leaving them with water and firewood and promising to return when it was safe to go back to Petritch,

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Boris left hotfoot to join the village men now encamped with the soldiers near the pass. The sun was in mid-sky when he came up with the motley company of volunteers that were disposed behind the regulars of the district regiment. The men were evidently excited over something which had just happened. Glancing rapidly around to find those from his own village, he spied in one group the tall figure of Schoolmaster Stepanoff, talking with the fat tailor and Black Michael.

"This is a good place for boys!" laughed Black Michael roughly. "Why do they not send the old women also?"

Boris flushed in angry surprise and looked up at the schoolmaster.

"What has happened?" he queried, ignoring Black Michael.

The fat tailor interrupted, with a sweeping gesture toward the pass. "Our guards from the frontier blockhouse yonder have given their post to the first Greek who asked for it, and are back here with our men. They say it is orders from the Government."

"Orders!" growled Black Michael, spitting angrily at a thistle. "When in the history of our country has a Bulgarian received an order like that!"

"New days have come," Stepanoff said shortly, polishing the silver butt of his ancient fowling piece.

"This brave fellow is tied to his mother's apron strings," Black Michael sneered roughly, thrusting his thumb toward Stepanoff. "He's trying to make us believe that a promise written on a piece of paper is going to tell the cannon on yonder heights to cease firing!"

"I'm trying to get it into your thick skull that we will never settle this or any trouble if we go back on that promise!" flashed Stepanoff. "We gave our word to the League of

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Nations and the League is the one to settle the dispute. Wait."

They waited for orders while noon cooled to afternoon and chilled into night. But no advance came, although there was still intermittent firing on the railroad station at Petritch. Finally they received the order to stack arms, and grumblingly unrolled their blankets.

The next day sentries from another blockhouse fell back to join the regulars, saying that still another post had been given over, under these same orders from Sofia. It was common knowledge that the colonel had sent another telegram to the Minister of War reporting it.

By noon of the third day, the men were openly criticizing and resenting the inaction. Just enough shells kept falling in the valley two miles to their rear to keep them nervous and indignant.

That evening, however, as they sat moodily around the camp fires, a rumor crept around the circles. "The Greeks are attacking at eight o'clock in the morning, Ludoff heard it at the colonel's tent . . ." The rumor acted like an electric shock to the bored company, and they turned with businesslike speed to the job of getting sleep.

The sun a few hours later slowly blazed its way up behind the ridge of mountains and swung into sight, flooding every ravine and sending a thrill of expectancy through the waiting lines.

Seven o'clock . . . half-past seven—but not even preliminary firing from their own guns!

"They are waiting to catch the enemy at the pass," Black Michael declared.

Then eight o'clock, no Greek attack; stranger still, no order to advance; strangest of all, no more firing from the hidden mountain guns on the Greek heights.

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"It is a trick," the short fat tailor remarked stolidly, and the men nodded hopefully.

At last, after hours tense with expectation, a dispatch rider appeared on the road from Petritch and flung himself from his horse in front of the colonel's tent. As one man the company grasped rifles and waited.

The colonel came out, called his officers, gave them a brief command. They saluted, turned on their heels and advanced toward their men. Boris could hardly breathe with excitement as their lieutenant approached.

"Attention!" he snapped. The men drew up. Then he opened his mouth — and shut it without a word. The men stared. Again he opened it, and this time he spoke. "General order from the Ministry of War. 'Should the Greeks attack, our troops will abstain from all resistance. The incident has been laid before the Council of the League of Nations, which is expected to stop the invasion.' Fall out!" He turned sharply and left them.

The villagers went back to their farms and Boris brought back his mother and Alenka to Petritch. The district regiment stayed at the pass for six days longer, to make sure that nothing went wrong. During the sixth night, they heard the faint commotion of pack mules taking mountain artillery down from the heights across the pass toward Greece. By midnight the enemy had withdrawn completely behind the lines, and the next day their own frontier guards went back to resume the posts from which they had so surprisingly been ordered out.

Five months later a stranger in a military coat stepped up to Boris as he was on his way home from the market place, and asked the road to Mother Petrovna's house.

"She is my mother," Boris replied, after looking at him a moment. This was surely the same man who had come be-

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fore Christmas to talk with his mother about their old farm in Greece. "I will show you, sir."

The man fell into step with him. "The village is quiet after the trouble of last October?" he asked conversationally. "What did you think of it?"

Something sympathetic in his voice pierced the boy's reserve, and little by little he told him everything that had happened — and finally gave voice to his never-ending question as to just why the Greek attack set for eight o'clock that special morning had never taken place.

"It began with that telegram you carried from the corporal on the mountain," the man said quietly. Boris stared at him.

"I helped, too," the man smiled. "We forwarded the news to Geneva, where the League you spoke of has its office. Our telegram woke up a man in his home there at six o'clock the next morning. That was Friday. This man telephoned by long distance to Paris and talked to the President of the Council of the League. At once, telegrams were sent by that quick-thinking President both to us at Sofia and to the Greeks at Athens, asking us to withdraw our soldiers immediately. As far as we were concerned, that had been done, of course. But the reason that the next morning attack did not take place was just this — the Greek commander who had scheduled it for eight o'clock received at six o'clock the order, telegraphed to him from Athens, to withdraw his men."

"Whew! That was quick work!" Boris ejaculated.

"That was only the beginning of all that was finally done," the stranger added. "Members of the Council were summoned by telegram to come to a special meeting in Paris that next Monday, three days off, in order to hear both sides presented by our delegate and the Greek delegate, and to decide what was right and fair for both countries to do, and the Secretary-General of the League sent messages through the

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air and under the ocean to inform all member states as to what was going on."

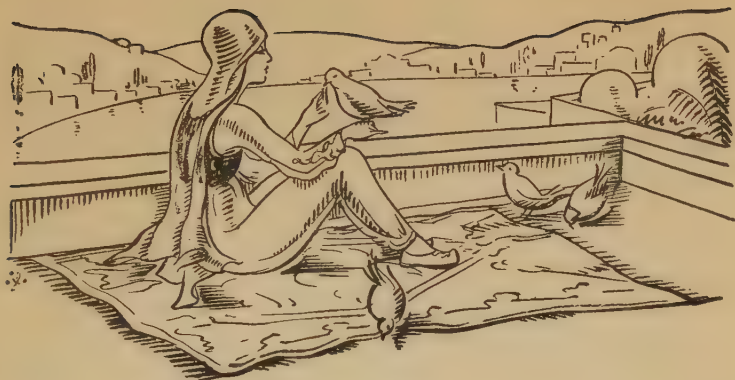
Boris pictured to himself the one single sentry lying on the ground in front of the blockhouse, and thought with amazement of fifty-five governments paying attention to a thing that started with the death of just one man. That had never happened before.

"They asked three neutral officers to go to the very spot where the fighting had occurred, to investigate," the man continued. "The Council members found, from their report, that the Greeks had been mistaken and had thought in the fog that we Bulgarians had a large army moving against them."

"Here's our house, sir," Boris interrupted him, lifting the latch and throwing open the wooden door. His mother, surprised but courteous, pushed a stool near the hearth for the stranger. Unbuttoning his coat, he drew a sealed envelope from his pocket and handed it to her.

"Mother Petrovna, the last wishes of the League Council concerning the trouble of this frontier are now being fulfilled. Greece makes good her former promise to pay for your farms, and sends you the price of your old house and field, across the border."

"Peace be with us all!" Mother Petrovna exclaimed softly, her hand going out to rest on Boris' shoulder.



THE SONG OF THE KNOTS

ON the flat-topped roof of her father's house in the Persian city of Kerman sat Fat'meh, the merchant's fourteen-year-old daughter, gazing at the sunset. She was absorbed in thought. That day her father had informed her that, according to a custom still existing among many Mohammedan families, he and his wife had arranged a marriage for her; Mirza Ali was the name of her future husband, a man about thirty, of an old and honorable line. He was a master-weaver, her father had continued in pleased tones, even the owner of one of the two smaller rug factories near the Eastern Gate. But what pleased Fat'meh most, in all her father said, was that in all the bazaars, Mirza Ali was the first man to whom the agents of the Firengi — those who lived in foreign countries — came to buy rugs. For it was known among them that his were always of the same pattern and dyes as those of his ancestors; they were therefore of more value than those from the larger and newer factories built and owned by other Firengi, who used the dyes of the Western world, and who also caused a great hurry in all they did, even as the Western world.

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Mirza Ali! The girl sighed happily and drew a light cashmere shawl closer about her shoulders as the April breeze bent the slender poplars in the courtyard garden lying dusky below her.

It was the hour of prayer. Fat'meh's eyes turned to watch an old white-turbaned Mohammedan priest in a balcony of a near-by mosque tower chant the "Call to Evening Prayer." As his voice rose and fell in weird cadences, Fat'meh knew that hundreds of the faithful, hearing, would devoutly spread prayer rugs and kneel facing southwest toward the sacred city of Mecca. She looked toward the Eastern Gate, wondering if Mirza Ali were also making ready for prayer.

As a matter of fact, at that moment the tall, black-haired master-weaver and owner was far from any desire to pray. He was standing at the open door of his small, mud-brick weaving shop, his eyes fastened on the low-walled building across the road. Heedless of his own weavers flocking past him from the now dark room behind, he was watching the weavers from his rival's looms emerge from the factory opposite. A few women were among them; but most of them were children, some of whom were not yet six years of age. His eyes grew hard as he saw them stretch arms and legs, stiff after the customary weaving day of twelve hours, "sunrise to sunset," which they spent seated on the narrow benches that had to be gradually hoisted from the floor as the rug patterns grew from the bottom upward by the infinite rows of knots.

As he stared, his eye was caught by the bright yellow dress of one small girl. She seemed happier than the others; and as she passed, holding the hand of an older boy, he heard her say: "The rug I weave has such beautiful flowers, Mustapha!" It seemed to him that the child walked with difficulty. But that would not have been unusual, he thought bitterly.

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Mirza Ali turned back frowning into his empty weaving room with its five tall looms standing against the walls. As he felt of the final rows of knots to make sure they were properly pressed down with the iron combs, he gritted his teeth. Abdullah Sivandi, across the street, was selling three rugs in the bazaars for the price of two of his own. Abdullah could do it because he hired such small children, as did also the larger factories. In excuse, they said that the tiny knots needed in the patterns of the rugs of Kerman could best be tied by tiny fingers. Well, that was true. But as for Mirza Ali, when a promise had been recently signed by the Persians with certain Firengi, far to the westward, not to permit such young children to work at the looms, he himself had let all who had not seen their tenth birthday go, and now employed only women and older boys and girls, whom, therefore, he had to pay more.

The master-weaver's thoughts went to Fat'meh, his dainty, dark-eyed flower of a bride-to-be. Suppose she, too, had been crippled in body, as were some of the older girls who had sat for years on weavers' benches! His foot caught on the end of a loom.

"Thou son of a burnt feather!" he growled crossly, pushing the loom back. Then he went out into the fading sunset. The chant of the muezzin was over, and he spread a prayer rug toward Mecca.

Above the city hovered hundreds of homing pigeons, circling around tall pigeon towers built here and there above the flat roofs. In the heart of the city, Fat'meh, preparing to descend to the *anderun*, the women's part of the house, felt a gentle clutch at her shoulder and a soft cooing in her ear.

"Kabootar, my beauty! You at last!" she murmured, stopping and pulling from her silk blouse the grains of corn that the pigeon had evidently come for. "Eat! And may the

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Lord of the Universe keep every feather of thine from harm!"

After a few dainty pecks, the bird spread his wings and gracefully flew over the wall surrounding the roof. She ran to watch him as he alighted in the street beneath. For a moment she paused, gazing down at the crowded street where she was so rarely allowed to walk. It had a fascination for her: noise of shuffling sandals on the cobblestones and chatter of a hundred voices; colors, the red and black of men's fezzes, the gay scarves of the women, and the billowy cloaks of brown and blue and black; animals, like that short-eared donkey hidden under a load of brushwood from the mountains, and dogs, savage, mongrel "sags" who belonged to nobody and who ran in packs. There went three opium sellers, balancing on their heads round copper tins of opium, having left the opium tax collector's office. Here came a group of children, some running, others plodding along.

All at once as she watched, a dog snatched a long round dark loaf of native bread from under a boy's arm. The boy yelled. Other dogs barked. The street almost instantly became a confusion. To rescue the bread, someone threw a stone at the dog, but, missing the dog, hit one of the pigeons which had arisen in alarm from the street. Fat'meh saw it flap a wing in a queer way and flutter back to the street.

"It's my Kabootar!" she cried, beating her hands together. With relief, she saw a small girl, less than half her own age, squeeze her way through the crowd and tenderly pick up the bird.

"Poor little gray-feather!" she heard the child exclaim, nestling the injured pigeon against her neck above her ragged yellow dress. In a few seconds Fat'meh was at the street entrance below, ordering a servant to swing open the heavy, nail-studded plank door and get the bird.

THE SONG OF THE KNOTS

"But it is my bird!" objected the child stubbornly, shielding it with her shoulder as the servant tried to take it.

Fat'meh ran out beside the servant.

"You shall come into my garden," she commanded the yellow-rags, who eyed her distrustfully. But after a moment of hesitation, the child obediently followed her through the shadowy entrance and then into the most beautiful garden she had ever seen, sheltered by high walls covered with masses of rose vines. Tall, dark cypress trees pricked against the intense blue of the Persian twilight, seeming to screen them from the hubbub in the street outside. From somewhere came the soft music of a trickling fountain, too dim to be seen.

Fat'meh motioned the child to a bench covered with a soft rug.

"This is my bird," Fat'meh began gently, stroking the bird's neck. "Every day I feed him, so." She pulled out a newly discovered grain from her silky blouse. The pigeon, in pain, refused it. Fat'meh's eyes filled with tears of pity.

"Oh, yes, he is yours!" the child, watching her, cried impulsively. "Take him, khanum." She thrust the soft body into Fat'meh's hands. "I will keep him in my memory, where I will also keep these roses and this vine like the one I now weave in the rug." She pointed to some exquisite yellow blossoms that shone like gold in the dusk.

"You are a weaver of rugs?" Fat'meh asked with sudden interest as she caressed the pigeon. She looked at the ragged dress. "Where do you weave?"

"In a factory, by the Eastern Gate. And my master is Abdullah Sivandi, a strong and terrible man . . ." The child touched the blue bead on a string around her neck to ward off the Evil Eye. "I weave rugs that look like your garden, only the rug has no sweetness like this." She shut her eyes

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and sniffed a long breath of narcissus and hyacinths hidden in the shadows.

"What is your name?" Fat'meh asked.

The child hung her head. "Kafieh," she answered.

Fat'meh's eyes narrowed in sympathy. "Kafieh" — that meant "Too Many Daughters." "Where do you live?" she asked after a pause.

"I live afar," Kafieh answered simply. "On the hill northward. My mother is dead three years, and my father . . ." she pursed her little mouth in a significant gesture and blew out imaginary smoke, then nodded her head drowsily over one shoulder. Then she looked up with somber eyes. "All day he smokes the opium pipe. But he will expect me. I go. May Allah protect the kind khanum." She rose and made a deep salaam to Fat'meh.

The merchant's daughter clapped her hands. "Open the door," she commanded the servant who appeared. "And give this child as many fresh dates as her hands can hold."

The next day at the same sunset hour she stood leaning over the roof wall, and her eyes lighted as she caught sight of a familiar ragged yellow dress in the jostling mass below. "Kafieh!" she called, and tossed down a superb yellow rose.

Little yellow-rags looked up, stretching her neck as if it hurt. Fat'meh was beginning to notice that Kafieh always moved as if it hurt.

"Khanum!" the child shrilled delightedly, as she rescued it from a donkey's feet. Then she was lost under the towering form of a camel humping his way crossly behind the donkey.

The next day and the next Fat'meh and Kafieh waved to each other at the sunset hour; it became a ceremony of friendship.

Midsummer arrived, and the brooks from the mountains dried up into the parched earth. The great crops of poppy-

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heads were gathered, leaving only the lonely stalks that stood like tall gray stubble. Later, the winds began to blow down the great, empty stretches of the Dasht-i-Lut to the north-east. Finally, snow — first, light and quickly melted, then heavy and drifting. Muleteers, coming in their thick sheep-skin coats to the bazaars, said it was three feet deep in the Pass of the Pearls.

Meanwhile, the merchant's house was full of bustle. Fat'meh was to be married soon. Garden, pigeon, Kafieh were all forgotten. Fat'meh sat in a room gay with rainbows of silk, gauze, embroideries, attended by soft-voiced needlewomen. One after another they laid aside filmy garments, embroidered slippers into which she delightedly slipped her henna-tipped toes, and the black chador, the outer garment that she must wear on the street. It was all quite exciting.

At last the two wedding ceremonies were over — first, the civil, and then, after many days, the religious. Friends, feasting, presents to everyone, then Mirza Ali taking her to his house, which stood next to her own father's.

"It is lovelier than a dream!" the little bride sighed happily over and over as she walked in the new garden and watched the pink crocuses of spring appear from the thawing ground. She had found, first of all, to her good fortune, that Mirza Ali was kind to her. He petted her, brought her from the bazaars white sweetmeats, jewels set in silver, and once a beautiful little volume of verses written by the famous Persian poet Saadi — verses which sometimes made her cry over their sadness.

The wide blue skies seemed wider and bluer than ever to Fat'meh as she waited in the garden one afternoon for her husband to return from a trip to Shiraz. Sunset was approaching.

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All at once the familiar yelping of dogs pierced the air, a snort of an angry camel, and the shout of cameleers. Fat'meh picked up her shawl and ran to the flat roof to look down. Below lay the old scene, which she had remembered only occasionally during the last days. She gave a sharp glance at the confusion below. Where was the ragged yellow dress? The short scuffle in the street was soon over, but no cheerful little Kafieh waved at her, although she waited until all the factory children had passed by.

Just as she was turning away from the roof wall in disappointment, she noticed a boy shuffling down the street, carrying a big bundle in his arms, a yellow bundle, much dirtier than the yellow she was looking for. She bent down precariously over the wall to look. Suddenly she covered her eyes.

It was Kafieh! But such a bent, crooked Kafieh! The child lay cradled in her brother's arms, her distorted spine making it hard for him to hold her, her legs curved back almost at right angles. Her eyes were closed.

"Kafieh!" called Fat'meh frantically.

The child opened her eyes and looked vaguely up. "Who calls?"

"A beautiful khanum with eyes like a gazelle's," her brother answered, stopping with what had now become his daily burden.

"It's Fat'meh!" called the voice from the roof wall. "Don't you remember me?"

Kafieh smiled and waved her hand.

"Khanum!" she called back. "Khanum! My eyes have been stitched on your door for long days, but you never came."

"Bring the two inside," Fat'meh ordered the servant. A moment later the great front door swung open and Mustapha entered with his burden.

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"Sit and tell me all — why your brother carries you, and why you could not see me from the street!" Fat'meh commanded, leading them into Mirza Ali's garden.

Then the story came out.

Kafieh told it without emotion. It was the old story of so many of the Kerman weaving looms: the narrow carpet beam with no back where they sat, hoisted sometimes to the height of a man as the rugs grew, seven days of work every week, with a half holiday on Fridays, the Mohammedan Sabbath, the months and months spent in tying the knots which made the pattern on the warp — three hundred and fifty of them to the square inch — the flying particles of wool snipped off by scissors as the rows of knots were completed, and the slowly crippled bones and dimming eyes.

Fat'meh looked at Kafieh's distorted knees. "But didn't you run around when you ate your noon bread?"

"They never let us down," Kafieh answered simply. "It was so cold, too, in winter, that we sat close together to keep warm, and in the hot days there was no air to breathe."

"How many knots could you tie?" asked Fat'meh miserably, thinking of Mirza Ali and wondering if it was so at his looms also.

"My sister is a very good weaver," the boy interrupted, with a touch of pride. "She can tie forty knots a minute. Only now she cannot see well."

"But was there not enough light?" persisted the merchant's daughter, trying to imagine what it must be like.

"There were no windows," Kafieh answered with a sigh. "They thought that if we had windows to look out of, we wouldn't tie the knots well. We had to sing the 'Song of the Knots,' you see, to keep the pattern straight; the colors are so hard to remember. Listen, khanum."

She chanted a crooning little melody. "Two red, three

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yellow, five blue, four green . . .' That is the 'Song of the Knots.'"

The lump in Fat'meh's throat nearly choked her. "Who lets you work like this?" she burst out, thinking of her own happy garden, and kissing with sudden impulse the old-young face of the child.

The brother and sister looked at each other for a moment. Then Kafieh replied without a trace of feeling: "Our father, you see . . ." and she attempted to make the playful old gesture of the opium pipe. "He smokes all day. We are not rich, to buy opium. So he went to Abdullah, that terrible man . . ." again the fumble to find the charm against the Evil Eye . . . "and he gives my father a hundred kran every month for opium if he sends his five children to weave for him. My two sisters are married, but they are little like me. Mustapha, this boy, weaves also, and next month they will take Rasul, my other brother, for he will then be five years old." With a passion of sudden tears she caught at Fat'meh's skirt. "My little Rasul! My little Rasul!" she cried over and over.

Fat'meh pressed her lips together. A deeper light than happiness had yet lighted suddenly burned in her eyes. She patted Kafieh's hand and stood up. "Return home," she said to the two. "I shall send you fruit and bread. Surely good must come after such evil, in some way. Allah is compassionate."

A short while after they had gone, Mirza Ali returned and found Fat'meh sitting by the fountain, absorbed in thought. "How is My Pearl Princess?" he asked, seating himself beside her. The servant brought tea. Together they watched the crescent moon slip out of sight behind a lacelike poplar tree. He repeated his question.

Fat'meh, considering silently, began: "My Lord of All Goodness, your kindness is great."

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Mirza Ali sipped his scalding hot tea from a little thistle-shaped glass tumbler. "What does my Queen of Beauty desire?" he replied.

Fat'meh faced him, though it took courage. "This, my Lord," she said.

In five minutes he had the story of Kafieh. He sat staring at his glass of tea, grown cold as he listened. When Fat'meh ended with a plea to go to Kafieh's house he replied with deliberation:

"You may go, once, with Kadiza Khanum, my honored mother, and Safvid the servant may at all times carry food. But listen, Delight of My Eyes. Let not one word of this reach the ears of Abdullah Sivandi, lest he think I plan some evil against him. He is a man to whom Allah gave no heart. He — and certain others like him, not only in Kerman, nor even in Persia alone — has no thought in this life but for the gold to be received in the bazaars of the world. Even the promise concerning these little ones who work at our looms he casts aside as if it were nothing."

Fat'meh, almost fearing to ask if his factory was like Abdullah's, opened her mouth to speak but lost courage.

Mirza Ali, however, guessed her question, and smiled as he took her hand. "No children such as Kafieh weave at my looms, nor at the looms of my friends," he said gently. "But it is the hour of slumber," he broke off, getting up from the marble bench. "First, though, I will tell you a thing which is for your pink-tipped ears alone, My Heart."

She had risen obediently and stood looking up into his face.

"I heard rumor in the bazaars concerning those Firengi from so many lands, who in a great house by the side of a lake in the Land of Snowy Mountains, received that promise from us. These Firengi — with whom sit three of our own Persians — watch what passes in the places where work is

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done throughout the whole world. They have sent but just now a message to our rulers in Teheran. They say:

“It has come to our ears that ye have forgotten the promise; we hear that the smallest weavers are still at your looms. If Persia forgets, should not likewise other countries forget, fearing lest Persia gain more gold than they in the bazaars of the world? Only as ye and they abide by this promise — and not only concerning the weavers, but like promises concerning certain other workers — will there be happiness and health to those who labor.”

Fat'meh's eyes began to shine like stars in the dusk as she caught his meaning. He smiled back as he ended: “To-morrow, it is said, a messenger from Teheran will come to meet with the master-weavers and owners here in Kerman, to discuss what shall be done.”

Fat'meh raised his hand to her lips. “To-morrow I go to see Kafieh, my Lord,” she exclaimed. “May I tell her?”

The next morning she and Kadiza Khanum, covered in their chadors and piloted by Safvid, sought out Kafieh's hut.

At the ragged edge of the city near the Northern Gate they found it, one-roomed, windowless, a specter-thin skeleton of a man squatting at the low round door smoking opium through a wooden pipe with a porcelain bowl. His eyes were fixed, as if he did not see them, and the air around him almost choked them with its terrible fumes. Drawing in their skirts, they stooped through the low doorway.

It was almost too dark to see. Then a small voice called from a corner: “Khanum! Here I am!”

Fat'meh picked her way over the mud floor and found Kafieh curled up on a bundle of rags. The stench of the room made the older girl feel sick.

“You are not weaving to-day?” she asked gently, standing beside the child.

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"No. It hurts here." Kafieh put her hand over her heart. "Abdullah Sivandi will not like it when I go back to-morrow."

"You shall never go back!" cried Fat'meh. "I will bring you to live in my garden! But first I shall send Safvid to bring the Firengi doctor. He will make you well!"

Covering her face with the white veil she wore, she turned eagerly to the door, forgetting her message in an overwhelming desire to help and get Kafieh out of that wretched darkness.

"But oh, Rasul!" Kafieh wailed after her. "He will be five years old the next new moon, and they will take him to sit in my place!"

"Allah is merciful," was all Fat'meh could reply, in the words of one of their prayers. Her eyes were full of tears as she and Kadiza Khanum picked their way out into the brilliant sunlight.

The doctor came, so Safvid reported to her later. He had shaken his head savagely at the sight of the little weaver, and picking her up tenderly in his arms, had taken her in a carriage to the Firengi hospital.

"We can do nothing for her poor little body," he had said briefly to Safvid. "I will save her life, though, and when she is well enough, your khanum may have her taken to her garden. But also, tell your khanum this — that if Kafieh is made to weave before twelve moons have passed, her next knots will be tied on the looms of Paradise itself."

That evening Mirza Ali came home late. Fat'meh was waiting for him by the fountain. "Did my Lord talk with his friends and the messenger from Teheran?" she asked as soon as Safvid had placed the tea beside them and withdrawn.

"We talked," he assented contentedly. "Listen, Fat'meh. This is what we finally have decreed, we master-weavers and owners, and Abdullah Sivandi among us. Every man will

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make the benches in his factory broader, with backs, and standing always on the floor. He will make windows in the walls, to give happiness and light. In the winter, he must burn many kursis to give heat. He shall let his youngest weavers work for only eight hours of each day, and they may run about and talk and eat at midday. Does it please My Heart?"

Fat'meh's eyes shone. "May blessings be on those Firengi for their help!" she cried. Then suddenly, she remembered. "But must Rasul, after all, become a weaver when the next new moon appears?" she asked, part of her joy gone. "He will then be five years old."

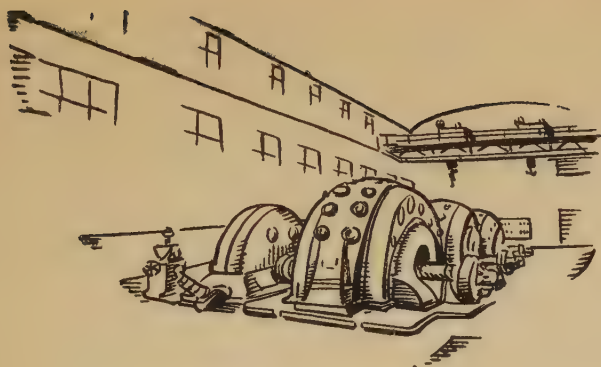
In Mirza Ali's dark eyes came a triumphant look of satisfaction. "No!" he replied emphatically. "Abdullah nor none other may take any child to weave unless he has seen his eighth birthday!"

Fat'meh sprang to her feet.

"Allah the compassionate!" she exclaimed. "To-morrow I go early to lighten Kafieh's heart. For I will tell her that *now* it will be three years of happiness before Rasul must learn to sing the 'Song of the Knots'!"



*"Three years of happiness before Rasul must learn the
'Song of the Knots'!"*



MIMI AND ERNST

A BITTER February wind was blowing across a market square in Vienna where fourteen-year-old Mimi stood in line with two hundred other women and girls, waiting her turn to enter the grocery shop. She shivered and drew her velvet cloak tighter about her thin shoulders. After half an hour, she found herself before the long counter.

"Two loaves of bread, bitte," she began.

"Bread is to-day six thousand kronen the loaf, Fräulein," the clerk replied.

Mimi gasped. Prices had risen again! Her hand clutched the bulky purse under her arm. She had only ten thousand kronen, and that must buy a week's food for her mother, her older brother Ernst, and herself.

A few minutes later she stepped out of the store, under her arm a loaf of bread, two pounds of sugar, a winter cabbage and a tin of evaporated milk; they could do without cheese. The purse was empty.

A lump came into her throat as she remembered for the hundredth time what her father had last said. It had been

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four years ago, early in October, 1918, when he was home on his last leave from his regiment. To provide a steady income for his family in case anything happened to him in their desperate artillery drive southward, he had invested his final eighty thousand kronen in Austrian war bonds. As he kissed them good-by he had declared that the four hundred and eighty kronen of monthly interest from these bonds would give them all they needed, and even send Ernst to the Technical Institute when he had graduated from the "Realschule." It ought, also, to allow Mimi to attend the Conservatory of Music as soon as she was ready.

That generous thought of her father's meant fifty-five hundred kronen a year for everything! And to-day, in these bitter, bankrupt days after the Peace Treaty, fifty-five hundred kronen were worth so little that a whole year's income was not enough to buy food for one week! Fortunately, Ernst was receiving a small salary at the *Electrische Centrale*, the power plant where he worked on afternoon or evening shifts after a morning at school. But even then, they did not have enough. As a matter of fact, this very loaf of bread under her arm had been paid for with part of the money which a queer old man had just given her mother in exchange for her sapphires and string of pearls. Before the jewels, the man had bought their heavy silver trays and pitchers with the Von Brunner coat-of-arms, and even before that, four oil paintings that had hung in their drawing-room.

Mimi, struggling with her bundles against the wind, was glad for an instant that her father had not known that long lines of housewives would ever have to wait at the grocery stores of Vienna every Wednesday, nor be saddened by the wandering groups of shivering workmen from the closed factories, who slept, even in winter, on benches in the leafless parks. He had loved his beautiful city so deeply — and now

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it was one of the hungriest, coldest, most miserable cities in the world.

Hurrying on, Mimi reached their stately house opposite Schoenbrunn Park, where emperors had once walked. The empty halls of the Von Brunner home echoed as she closed the heavy outer door. A quick glance showed her that no one was in.

"Mother is having lunch with the Americans and the other workers at the Friends' Service Mission," the girl decided, "and Ernst will eat his at the Relief Station School Lunch. What shall I cook for supper?"

In the kitchen, she peered into one container after another. "This nachtmal will finish the rice," she sighed to herself. "There is enough coffee for two more days — and that's all."

Then she wandered upstairs to the still dainty pink bedroom where she and her mother now slept together. Making the bed took only a few minutes. Across the hall she straightened Ernst's room, dusting the funny iron cylinders and tubes out of which her brother was little by little constructing a small turbine engine which ran when he connected it with the water faucet in the bathroom. She gave it an affectionate pat; it made her think again of her father.

"You will be one of our great Austrian engineers," he had prophesied to his son that last leave of his. And turning to his daughter, he had said:

"This piano of mine is yours, Mimi. Some day you must attend the Conservatory of Music. I think you will give to Austria the melodies that I have never had time to create."

As she went slowly down the broad staircase, Mimi realized now that it was these dreams of years ahead that were helping them all, her gallant bright-eyed mother, particularly, to smile even in this freezing, hopeless winter of 1922.

Sitting at the piano in the chilly drawing-room, she fingered

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a few chords thoughtfully. She could almost feel the fireplace behind her yawning its black dusty mouth at her, hungry for the coal it had not had for months. The wind seemed to be rising, and snow would probably follow.

"Snow is warmer than wind, anyway," she murmured with a half smile. Then she turned to a Chopin prelude which she had been learning by herself. Absorbed in the music, she did not notice how time passed.

All at once a loud ring at the door bell brought her to her feet with a start. The room was growing shadowy — friends never came to call at that late hour. Who could it be?

Flinging the door open, she came face to face with two men supporting Ernst between them. Ernst tried to smile at her.

She caught his hand. "What is the matter!" she cried.

"I'm all right," Ernst said in a queer weak voice. "They had better take me to my room, Mimi."

Leading the way, his sister stood anxiously outside the closed door till one of the men came out. Mimi observed him swiftly. He was evidently of the working class; she noticed that he, too, looked thin and worn.

"He fainted at the office, Fräulein," she heard the man say in a guarded tone. "We called the doctor, and the Herr Doktor said it is his heart. He says . . . he says . . ." the man fumbled his cap in his hands ". . . he says it is because Herr Von Brunner has not had enough to eat."

Mimi stiffened with fear. "Thank you. You were kind to bring him home," she said as soon as she could speak.

"If the Fräulein would allow me . . ." the man ventured hesitatingly, not looking at her ". . . if she would accept a little butterbrot and some apples, my wife and I would like to . . ."

Mimi drew away, her Von Brunner pride touched to the

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quick; but she recognized his generosity. "You are indeed very kind," she replied in a troubled voice. "But you and your wife need your butterbrot. We can give my brother all he needs."

When the men had gone, she stood a moment in the darkening hallway thinking rapidly. "I must not trouble mother with this," she said to herself. "What have we left to sell that will bring plenty of food?" She forgot all about the hungry feeling that she herself had had for weeks and weeks.

The next minute she knew what the answer was. The queer old man — the "Schieber," as Ernst laughingly had called him — had once asked if they would sell their piano. All three of them had quickly answered "No!" For the piano spoke to them of their father more than any other thing in the house, and it meant far more than food. But now it meant Ernst's life. Mimi's heart flooded with relief that they still had it to sell. Slipping into her father's unused library, she closed the door lest her brother hear, and sat down at the telephone.

Ten minutes later, when she tiptoed into his room with a candle in one hand and a bowl of hot rice soup in the other, there was a smile on her face.

Ernst was lying with his eyes closed. "I'm all right, Mimi," he muttered as he heard her light step.

"And this hot soup will make you feel ten times more right, dear Ernst!" she said, setting the candle on the table beside his engineering textbooks. As she stood by his bed, she saw with a touch of fright how sunken and pale his cheeks looked.

"He looks more like an old man of fifty than just eighteen!" she thought, and tears rushed to her eyes. "He has always let mother and me eat more than our share! Only we didn't know. Oh, if that old man doesn't come to-night . . ."

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By the time Frau Von Brunner came home, Mimi had Ernst thoroughly warm with an earthenware jug of hot water at his feet. The mother and daughter sat in his room while he slept. Frau Von Brunner busied herself with a baby's sweater which she was knitting for one of the young mothers, to whose baby the Friends' Service Mission was supplying milk. Mimi had told her what the workingman had said, and of her telephone message to the Schieber. Now she sat waiting for him, watching her mother's slim fingers and listening to the wind which lashed the chestnut trees in the garden below.

The expected ring of the bell echoed through the dark hallway. "Let me go alone, Mütterchen!" Mimi pleaded as she rose.

It seemed only a few minutes before the door closed again as the old man left. For a moment there was silence. Then Frau Von Brunner heard soft music stealing up from the piano. Ernst turned sleepily and opened his eyes.

"There's our song bird again," he murmured contentedly.

"It's our little bird's swan song," his mother thought with tears in her eyes. Even though lessons had long been given up, Mimi had been practicing faithfully—but how could she prepare herself for the conservatory now?

The girl joined them a little later, a wistful smile on her face.

"Mother!" she whispered eagerly as the two went to the pink bedroom. "The piano is going to his daughter's house in the country. He will send us a load of wood on the cart that comes to take the piano to-morrow. And each week for six weeks he will send us a basket of eggs, a ham, a sack of potatoes, and two pounds of butter. Think, Mütterchen! Ernst hasn't had butter for *six years*!" She hugged her mother and undressed quickly. In the middle of the night,

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Frau Von Brunner thought she heard Mimi crying softly to herself; but when she went to comfort her daughter, the girl seemed to be asleep.

A month passed. Although the doctor was still keeping him in bed, Ernst began to look like his old self, and laughed and joked with his mother and Mimi. He could not understand, however, where the surprising bits of fried ham, buttered toast, or baked potatoes came from; Mimi only teased him whenever he asked. He had long since stopped asking her to play for him on the piano, because she invariably answered that she preferred singing in his warm room to touching cold keys in a still colder drawing-room. Occasionally a friend of his from the Technical Institute, which he had entered the fall before, came to bring him news of what was going on.

It seemed that government officials under the new Austrian Republic were hoping to go forward with plans to electrify the great trunk railroad line that climbs westward over the mountains of the Austrian Tyrol and connects Vienna with Switzerland. Ernst was telling Mimi about it one sunny March afternoon.

"We can make two million horse power of electricity by using our water power in the Tyrol," he said, his blue eyes shining with a far-off look. "That means that in time we can run all our locomotives and factories by electricity. Why, we'll save, in just the railroads alone, four hundred thousand tons of coal every year. Figure, Mimi, how much that is!" he teased. "We pay four hundred kronen now for two and a half pounds — not tons — of coal, here in Vienna."

Mimi, trying to make him a shirt out of an old linen skirt of her mother's, laughed. She didn't know in the least, and all she really cared about was that he should keep on growing cheerful and strong. She purposely neglected to tell him

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that the six weeks' of provisions was drawing to an end. She said nothing of meeting her old music master, Herr Springer, in the Hauptstrasse that morning. He had offered her a scholarship in the conservatory, beginning the next fall — and she had had to refuse. Nor, finally, did she mention the fact that her mother had come home from Esder's Department Store, where she had gone to buy him a plain cotton shirt to wear to school, without the shirt. The clerk had told her most politely that, instead of the six kronen they had cost before the War, they now cost two hundred thousand.

"Austria has a great future!" Ernst would say. "She has no end of lumber in her forests. Those iron-ore mines in the Styrian Mountains are magnificent, not to speak of our coal and other mines. Look at our machine-tool factories, and our locomotive works — they are among the best. And Mimi, think what skillful artisans we have! Fine leather, gold work, weavers — lots more. Why, all Europe together has no more skilled workers than we!"

Ernst thrilled them with his belief in the future. The mere fact that Austria had absolutely no money to start all this again did not seem to bother him. In vain did his friend argue that England, Holland and other countries, whose loans had kept them going for three years, now were refusing to lend further because the money was swallowed up and nothing permanent was done with it.

"I insist!" Ernst would laugh, patting his snubby little turbine model as he began to move about his room.

It was not long before he was allowed to come downstairs for the first time. Frau Von Brunner and Mimi planned a little feast for the occasion. From a peasant outside the city they had bought three veal cutlets — the "schnitzel" for which Vienna is famous.

Ernst talked a great deal. He was jubilant. The whole

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world looked rosy to him. "I tell you, we've got it in us! We've got too many things the rest of Europe needs! Only let us harness our water power and electricity to those railroads — we will be trading from the Black Sea to the Atlantic and across to America!"

The dessert finished, they went into the drawing-room for coffee. Mimi had lighted half a dozen candles, and laid a generous wood fire in the grate. But she had been very careful to place an armchair for Ernst facing away from the dark corner where the piano had stood. Talking rapidly to distract his attention, she led him to it.

"Tell us how they electrify railroads!" she urged, seating herself on the arm of the chair.

But Ernst remained standing. With sinking hearts, the other two watched him eagerly take in the room he had not seen for weeks. Finally his gaze reached the dark corner. They saw his eyes flash, then suddenly the warm happiness faded from them. For fully a minute he stood silent while the firelight threw queer, twisting shadows on the tapestried walls.

"Father's piano — gone?" When he spoke his voice was so low and strained that they could hardly hear him. All at once he turned and dropped heavily into the chair. His shoulders sagged forward, and he leaned his head in his hands.

"Ernst . . . dear . . ." his mother said softly. "It really doesn't make any difference."

"Yes, it does, Mother," he replied slowly, raising a set face to hers. "It means that, after all, Austria has . . . nothing . . . nothing. I've been a silly idiot not to know it. What hope is there for us?"

The next week he plunged doggedly into his studies as if to forget how hopeless it all looked.

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As summer came on, however, life became easier, because, with the vegetables Mimi raised beside the iris and roses in their garden, food was less hard to get. But the gay light that Mimi loved was gone from Ernst's eyes. All Mimi heard him say was that if Austria had two million gold kronen, they could finish their plans — lay electric cables along the railroad lines, change the steam locomotives into electric-driven locomotives, and complete the damming of certain rivers and lakes whose released water would generate, in great power houses, the electricity. That alone would save seven million gold kronen every year.

"Chancellor Seipel has gone himself to nearly every capital in Europe, but no one nation is able or willing to back such a huge loan," he said briefly and bitterly, one blistering hot night in August when he came back from the *Electrische Centrale* tired and discouraged. "They have no confidence that we can manage it."

The whole of Austria was discouraged. More than two hundred thousand people were without work, and there was no money anywhere — only debts.

Mimi, asking no questions, busied herself with the garden. Several times she helped her mother and the other ladies at the Anglo-American Friends' Service Mission as they gave out little packages of cocoa, sugar, beans, milk and much-needed soap to hundreds of mothers and babies. Fall came, and another cold winter set in.

About that time, rumors began to circulate that Chancellor Seipel had met with success of some sort at Geneva; and one day, early in October, Ernst talked excitedly to his mother of a certain contract the Austrian representative there had just signed. But Mimi, who did not pretend to understand politics, paid little attention, and resolutely shut her ears to the market gossip, which was also about this contract.

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So she was somewhat surprised when, coming home with Ernst from High Mass at the Pfarrkirche one January Sunday, she saw him bow to a broad shouldered man whose appearance was decidedly foreign. "Who is it, Ernst?"

Ernst replied shortly, "He is the Herr Doktor Zimmerman, the burgomaster from Rotterdam. I'll tell you more about him when he has shown us what the League can do."

"The League?" Mimi repeated. "The one we belong to at Geneva?"

Ernst nodded. "Dr. Seipel was finally sent to the League for help last fall. The fifty-two nations represented there got up enough courage to float the loans we need. They appointed a commission to study the affair. You may have heard me telling mother of the contract we signed with the League Council."

"Oh, never mind," Mimi returned contentedly. "It's only important that you become a famous engineer."

Ernst threw back his head, at that, and laughed. "Of no importance that the League guarantees us 'political integrity,' and gives us twenty years to pay back our old loans, as well as have a right to make new ones!" he chuckled. "This burgomaster from Rotterdam is to be here as the representative of the League for two years. Branches of our federal government are working with him to reduce some of our expenditures and to put Austria on her feet."

Mimi began to pay more attention, after that, to chance bits of news that she heard at the Service Mission and in the market. But beyond the fact that the milk necessary for the babies was supplied by Vienna itself instead of by the foreigners at the mission, she understood very little. She did realize, however, that the interest from her father's bonds in the bank began to be worth something. Also, as she went to market week after week she found that the prices, instead of

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climbing steadily up and up, were always the same. In fact, she could now afford to buy schnitzel, butter and other luxuries that were now more frequently on sale there.

Mimi often went about the house singing these days. One afternoon late in June she was humming to herself as she gathered roses for the one old silver vase they had left. They were about to serve coffee in the garden, and she and her mother were waiting for Ernst. When he appeared, Mimi gazed at him, almost startled. His face was radiant as he strode toward them. Drawing a blue print from his pocket, he laid it on the little green iron table beside the coffee cups.

"When you need a friend, go to Geneva!" he said in a solemn tone but with a twinkle in his eyes. "That, Mimi, is the plan for deepening the Spullersee Reservoir up in the mountains, which will give us power to electrify our railroads as far as Bludenz near the Swiss border, and finally to the border itself. The whole plan for the electrification of our railways is part of the League's reconstruction scheme, you know. And this, Mother" — drawing a small printed sheet from the same pocket — "is my contract as an assistant engineer at the reservoir, with a salary of three hundred and fifty thousand kronen a month! Enough to buy you a new cloak, Mother, and a new dress for Mimi!"

A new dress! If Ernst only knew! It was not for a new dress that Mimi had longed, the last Sunday morning, when, at the Burg Kapella, the three of them had listened to one of Vienna's most glorious sacred concerts. Mimi patted Ernst's arm, but her laugh was unsteady. Her brother glanced keenly at her a moment. Then drawing his chair up to the table, he began to explain the blue print . . .

It was one Sunday in September, fifteen months later, that Ernst escorted his mother and sister to the Burg Kapella and

MIMI AND ERNST

left them there, explaining that he must see a certain man. As Mimi and her mother took their seats, the girl noticed a great many strangers in the audience — young men and girls, not much older than she.

"They are conservatory students!" she thought with a start. Not until the first powerful Bach Chorale ended was she able to keep her mind on the music.

"Mother," she said, as they reached the sunshine outside after the program was over, "the conservatory opens next week!"

Her mother smiled but made no comment. Just then Mimi caught sight of Herr Springer, leaning on his cane under a horse-chestnut tree, peering at the gay-colored throng coming out slowly through the great arched doorway. Apparently he was looking for them, for to Mimi's surprise, he made his way over to them and bowed low.

"Guten Tag, Frau Von Brunner!" he said. "Guten Tag, Mimi! Please be good enough to make my reply to your brother; tell him that I am expecting you next week." His blue eyes, almost hidden beneath bushy white eyebrows, twinkled at Mimi's complete astonishment, but without waiting for a reply, he bowed himself away.

"What does Herr Springer mean, Mother!" Mimi breathed.

"If you cannot guess, I will not tell you," her mother answered teasingly but happily. "You will have to ask Ernst."

Ernst was waiting for them at home.

"Herr Springer says he expects me . . ." Mimi began before the door had half closed behind them. Then she stopped abruptly, seeing the delight in her brother's face. The truth, which she had not dared to believe, dawned on her. "But . . . why . . ." she stopped again. "I told him, two years ago, that I couldn't accept the scholarship! What is there to practice on?"

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For answer, Ernst drew them both into the drawing-room. Frau Von Brunner put gentle hands on their shoulders as they halted in the middle of the room.

"Our dearest dreams for you both have come true, Mimi," she said softly.

Mimi wheeled instantly and looked toward the dark corner of the room. It was dark no longer. It was mellow gold in the noon light, and golden sunbeams fell aslant the shining surface of her father's piano, back in its old place.

THE "DOUBLE A" CABLE CODE

SOMEHOW a ship with cholera on board had slipped into the busy Japanese harbor of Kobe — "smuggled in," Taro's father said as the Japanese family of four sat around hibachi, the morning meal. Anyway, a case of the dread disease down along the crowded water-front streets had just been reported. Taro knew those streets slightly. Here he and his chum Jiro Matsu-Ura, whose father was a sea captain, had once trailed a missing sailor from Captain Matsu-Ura's freighter. Narrow, these streets were, always smelling of saki and raw fish, with leaning houses packed tightly on each side, lighted in early evening by cheap paper lanterns. Strange-tongued seamen from every corner of the Seven Seas shuffled in and out of bamboo-curtained tavern doors. And here, whenever plague or cholera broke out, the contagion swept like tide from the ocean. Taro's mind swiftly pictured what might happen again. He toyed with his chopsticks thoughtfully. Could it be the beginning of another adventure?

"What kind of a ship would dock with cholera on board?" he asked.

"It was not a regular merchantman, I am sure," Dr. Hara replied. "Their captains are responsible men. It probably was one of the coolie ships, or, still more probably, one of the small coastwise junks with cutthroat crews, which take on small cargoes in any port where their owners can get business.

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They sneak out of a port at night without being inspected and so have no inspection papers to show at the next port into which they steal their way at night and keep hidden."

"How do you find them, Papa-san"? Taro inquired, trying to hide a growing excitement.

"Chiefly by locating where they sell their cargoes," his father informed him. "In cholera, any kind of fruit, fish, or vegetable can carry the disease, as well as water or milk; the cargo, once unloaded, is sold cheaply to the poorer markets, and so the infection spreads. It is not the first time that cholera has been brought into our port, in spite of all we doctors at quarantine are doing to prevent it. Unless we can lay our hands on the ship and stop further infection, this case will mean another 'LM' report from Kobe, I am afraid," he ended with disappointment in his voice.

"What does 'LM' mean?" inquired Hanako, Taro's ten-year-old sister.

"'LM' means 'cholera' in the 'Double A' Cable Code, little chicken," her father replied. "Ask your brother to tell you about it some day. When Uncle Wasa took him to Singapore last March, he met the man who compiled the code. Didn't you, Taro?" he added with a twinkle in his eyes. He had been secretly much pleased that his son took so seriously the question of the spread of epidemic by ships, which problem he himself had been working on for years. To Dr. Hara, it was a matter of national pride not only that Japan had one of the finest public-health services in the world, but that it was due to Japan's suggestion that the Health Section of the League of Nations had sent a commission to study sea-borne diseases in the Far East.

Out of this had grown the establishment by the League of Nations of a central bureau at Singapore to collect information from public-health officers of the Far Eastern countries

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and send out to them weekly information bulletins on all port epidemics, and so help prevent spread of disease.

"And he took me to the French radio station of St. Assize at Saigon not so far away, where they broadcast the report every Friday night," Taro added. "The next time that father takes us to Tokio, Hanako, I'll show you our receiving station where we listen in to these reports."

But all the time he was talking, his mind dwelt on the words "smuggled in." Long before the family rose from the red-lacquered breakfast trays in front of them, he had decided on the first step. He needed Jiro's help, too.

That afternoon during the fencing lesson at school, he told his chum about it. Lunging, recovering, parrying with their bamboo swords, the plan came out in jerks.

"We must have a base of operation," Jiro whispered, as they went back to the schoolroom.

"Some place where we can hear the coolies at the dock talk," Taro supplemented softly.

"The dock where my father's ship comes in!" Jiro suggested as they went to their desks. "Meet you after school."

So it was that, two hours before the late September sun set behind the Rokko Mountains back of the city, the two boys perched on two posts at the end of the dock sat kicking their heels over the water. They were on one of the four city piers that stuck out into the blue harbor like fingers of a hand welcoming the world's shipping.

Closely the boys scanned every vessel in the harbor, at anchor or laying trails of gray smoke behind them as they steamed along. Their eyes searched the whole three miles of water front, from the quarantine buildings two miles to the right as far as the jumble of small sailing ships lashed together in the Kawasaki Dockyards at their left. Their ears, meanwhile, were tuned to the chatter in the wharf sheds behind them.

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Dock laborers, with strong muscles knotted in arms and legs, were emptying the great shed of crates, boxes, and bales which had come up the three thousand miles of Chinese coast from Singapore. Fragments of talk were all they heard — no clue as to where any secret unloading had gone on — until a voice with a whine mentioned that a neighbor had taken the cholera. Taro and Jiro looked at each other. Silently they slipped from their posts. Strolling in through the shed door as if looking for shelter from the wind, they leaned against a crate. The speaker seemed to be the thin short man who limped as he carried out a heavy bale of cotton. When he returned someone asked him how his neighbor had caught the cholera. Eyeing the questioner suspiciously, the lame man quickly picked up another load and went off without replying.

When a little later a whistle blew for all dock hands to quit work and close the sheds for the night, the two boys followed the man with the limp. He turned down one street after another in the crowded section, and passing a saki house, or tavern, stopped next door. The boys stopped, too, at a little distance to get their bearings. Three red lanterns marked the tavern. By them they would know it again. In the growing dusk they picked their way carefully back down the strange alleys to the dock and then up the broad street past the Custom House to the street called Yamamoto Dori, where they lived. It was at least a good beginning.

For a week the boys haunted the dock, sometimes alone, sometimes together. They watched the man with the limp, but he evidently was not going to talk more about the cholera.

"Three more cases," Taro's father said. "We cannot seem to find the source. As soon as we report to the Central Bureau in Singapore that we have twenty-five cases, they will send out word in their weekly bulletin that Kobe has a cholera epidemic."

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When Taro told his chum this, Jiro's face clouded. "That means that my father will have to have even the food and water inspected that he takes on board here, let alone the cargo itself," he said thoughtfully. "And if anybody in the crew catches cholera, his ship will have to anchor at quarantine, no matter what port they're in, for five days, as well as be fumigated. That costs money, Taro, for sometimes a cargo of things to eat will spoil in that time."

That afternoon, entirely by chance, they caught sight of a strange man outside the dockyards beckoning to the man with the limp. The lame man — Danpachi, the coolies called him — cast a furtive look at the dock superintendent and sneaked off to meet him. The boys followed, slipping from behind one crate to another until they were within earshot.

"My oranges are all sold," the man was saying. "When will you have more?"

Danpachi answered cautiously. "In six days — from Shanghai."

The fruit dealer — such he was — made an angry gesture. "Must my customers wait? Inspected fruit I can't afford to buy for them — they won't pay the price."

"Let them wait!" Danpachi replied with a shrug. "It's no harder on you than it is on me. Don't forget that the captain pays me no commission until you buy his oranges."

The dock superintendent, catching sight of Danpachi, called him back to work. The merchant turned sourly away, never noticing that two boys shadowed him past the saki house, past Danpachi's hovel, to his own fruit shop where two green paper lanterns at the door bobbed in the evening breeze.

The boys were jubilant. "All we have to do now is to get real evidence," they decided, retracing their way down the now no longer puzzling alleys.

When Taro reached home, his mother was in the midst of

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giving orders to O-saki the maid, concerning the packing of a small trunk. At his surprised question, she explained: "Your honorable father will sail for Europe on the steamship Suwa Maru in four days." Then she turned again to O-saki.

"Europe!" Taro exclaimed and hurried across the lawn to the small, separate building which was his father's office.

Here between two windows stood a large globe of the world over which he and Jiro had spent hours picking out the ports to which Captain Matsu-Ura had carried cargoes — Shanghai, Singapore, where Taro himself had been, Bombay so far west, but never Europe. Just then Dr. Hara entered from the street.

"Show me where you will go, Papa-san," Taro begged eagerly.

"So you have heard!" his father said genially, putting his medicine bag on a table. "Well, it will be a good journey, with one of my doctor friends from Tokio. First," and he bent over the globe, "nine days to Singapore, west with three stops in India, through the Suez Canal to Egypt — here. Then across this narrow sea to the south of Italy. Here at Naples I shall take a train to Germany, and here in Hamburg I shall do what I have dreamed of for years — I shall study for a few months about cholera under the German cholera expert, Dr. Hamel."

Taro looked up from the globe. "Dr. Hamel — he is one of the experts who advises the Central Bureau in Singapore?"

Dr. Hara laughed. "My son, is there anybody connected with the 'Double A' Cable Code of whom you are ignorant? Well, in February I shall be in England with my friend from Tokio. He is a delegate to what he calls an 'Interchange' of public health doctors of different countries which the Health Section of the League of Nations helped to arrange. There

will be men from twelve countries in Europe, as well as from Japan and the United States. My friend is especially interested in studying water supplies for large cities, food inspection and so on. I myself am especially anxious to see the larger fever hospitals. We shall end with a few days at the League headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland — here."

The next three days, Taro let Jiro scout alone along the water front. He himself hung about his father's office, helping pack books and copy reports of experiments his father wanted to talk over with Dr. Hamel. The evening before the Suwa Maru sailed, as they were finishing their packing, Tara asked if there had been any more cases of cholera reported.

"No. But that means little, for we have not yet traced the source of infection," his father replied gravely. "For that reason I am very sorry to leave Kobe just now."

"Father," said Taro suddenly, "Jiro and I are going to find out who those smugglers are." And he told him all they had done.

The doctor paused in sorting papers on his desk, and looked at his son. "How old are you?" he asked after a pause. "Twelve?" Taro nodded.

Suddenly the doctor laid the papers down, went into his inner office and returned carrying in his hands a sword Taro had never seen. It was two feet long with a handle of carved ivory, and a blade whose edge it was a point of honor to keep keenly sharpened.

"Taro, we come of an ancient and honorable family of samurai, the swordsmen of old Japan. I thought, therefore, that I should also be a soldier. I went to the war against Russia — the first man I killed I had to watch die, so I begged the commander of the regiment to transfer me to the field hospital. There I saw oh, what suffering! And now I know

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this, Taro — that war is not noble, as our ancestors thought, and that swords like these, that pass from father to son, are not really our most cherished possession, as they used to think. The saving of life is noble, not the taking of it — the risking of one's own life to save someone else, not the saving of it by killing another. It is not men who are our enemies, Taro; it is our own selves, our laziness, our selfishness, our dishonesty. Whatever makes life happier is more precious than any samurai sword — the playground out here on the shore near Kobe, hospitals, that 'Double A' Cable Code that warns of epidemic . . ." he stopped. Then placing the ivory sword in Taro's hands, the usually undemonstrative doctor placed his hand on the boy's shoulder as though he had found a new comrade. "When in the future this descends to you," he finished, "remember that it is an ancient and honorable symbol — and only a symbol. But remember from this very hour, Taro, that whatever weapon you use to save life, and to bring happiness out of suffering, is the truest weapon that you and I as samurai of this generation can wield."

Taro looked silently at the piece of yellowed ivory in his hand. Then his father took it from him, and Taro watched him as he put it back in its silver scabbard behind the inner office door. They said good-night quietly, and Taro crossed the lawn to the house, hardly aware of the autumn fog that blanketed everything. "I will not stop until I find that coolie ship!" he said aloud, his hands clenched in determination.

The Suwa Maru sailed at noon the next day in heavy fog. Taro, excused from school for the day, escorted his mother and Hanako home in the jinrikisha. Then he hurried to the quay to meet Jiro and learn if he had discovered anything new.

"I've a clue," Jiro told him mysteriously. Suddenly Jiro grasped Taro by the elbow and pulled him into a side alley, pointing to a tall brown cloaked figure, coming along the

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quay. Taro had a glimpse of a bearded face with a scar cutting across the left cheek and a black patch hiding the right eye.

"That man was talking with Danpachi yesterday. He's new," Jiro whispered as they slid out of hiding and followed him through the mist. "I trailed him from the dock as far as this and then lost him."

The one-eyed stranger finally reached the tavern with the three red lanterns. Jiro stopped in disappointment. "He'll stay in there forever!"

"We'd better wait," Taro advised. "He may go somewhere else." The boys flattened themselves against the wall and waited.

Sure enough, in less than ten minutes they saw him push the door open and glance up and down the street as if looking for somebody. Seeing no one, he turned down the alley that led to the fruit dealer's shop.

"This looks good!" Taro whispered, as their man disappeared in the shop. The boys could not see through the oiled-paper window, so Taro stood with his ear to the crack. The voices inside were low.

Suddenly, however, they rose in anger. "You promised five hundred yen for the next cargo," one voice shouted.

"But the risk on smuggled oranges is too great! Not a yen more than three hundred!" another exclaimed. There then was an exchange of sharp words in a language not Japanese.

Unexpectedly the door was flung open and the one-eyed stranger strode out, closely followed by the arguing fruit dealer. As the stranger turned angrily toward him, he came face to face with Taro. For an instant, the boy's blood seemed to freeze. He stood still, however, returning the gaze as steadily as he could. Jiro waited breathlessly.

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Then the dealer took a step forward and peered into Taro's face under his visored school cap. He snapped his fingers.

"This young hawk is not of this district," he said contemptuously. "Come on to the saki house. Danpachi will be waiting."

Satisfied, the stranger strode on down the alley with the dealer at his heels. Jiro and Taro drew together, their hearts beating like trip-hammers.

"We must follow," Taro whispered. "That's our man!" Jiro nodded.

They followed the swiftly walking pair at a cautious distance, and watched them enter the saki house. Soon the limping dock hand, Danpachi, came up the mist-filled alley. As he swung the door open and went in, the boys caught a glimpse of the long benches lined with men. To their dismay, the stranger had sat down in the farthest corner of the room. Taro drew a long breath. "We've got to get in, somehow, and near enough to hear. It's the only way to spot that orange ship."

They stood under a swaying red lantern figuring out a plan. At last they decided. Taking his school uniform coat off, Taro put it on wrong side out. Tearing a strip from his shirt, he made a rough sling for his arm; he smeared dust from the street over his face; and finally, ripping away the visor from his cap, he held it in his free hand like a beggar's begging bowl. Jiro helped him, his face troubled.

"You watch out here, and if I come out in a hurry, help me get away," Taro ordered. Opening the door of the tavern as little as possible, he squeezed through into the stuffy, smoky room, and stood blinking at the sea of faces that turned to look at every newcomer. There in the far corner sat the three men he must reach.

"May your ancestors never lack honor!" he began in a beg-

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gar's whine, his voice trembling a little. With a slight limp, he began his way around the room, holding out his cap and keeping his eyes half shut.

To his unutterable relief, the men turned again to their little china cups of saki. Beggars were common enough. Here and there someone flipped him a coin. He stopped first at one table and then another, until he reached the corner nearest the one-eyed stranger. Here he sank on a bench as if exhausted, his head dropped on his chest. He felt Danpachi throw him a sharp look, but soon the conversation was resumed.

"You will pay me what you promised for those oranges!" the one-eyed stranger threatened in a low, angry tone.

"With three of your crew sick with cholera?" exclaimed the fruit dealer. "That's a greater risk than we've ever run before. As I told you before, when only the cook was sick, I took a chance on being caught, and I gave you your price. But now with three men, instead of one, I refuse to pay you a single yen over four hundred."

"My commission comes out of what you pay him," Danpachi reminded the stranger.

The one-eyed man took a violent gulp of saki. "The old junk is due in Shanghai at midnight to-morrow, and when she gets back to Kobe, you'll answer to the captain and the crew for this, you cutthroats!" he growled. "You are a couple of water rats!" And again the strange language.

"And you are . . . what?" the fruit dealer asked with a leer.

"Wait until you come to trade with me in Siam!" the stranger flung back. "Our next cargo will be the last for you!"

Just then a man at another table in kindness pushed a bowl of saki toward Taro. The boy, absorbed in listening, forgot for the moment where he was, and answered politely in his his own voice, "I do not drink it, thank you, honorable sir."

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Hearing that reply, the three men near him stopped their quarreling short and stared at him. In a flash Taro knew what he had done. He sprang to his feet. Tossing his cap aside and jerking his arm out of the sling he made for the door. Everybody jumped up. He heard the one-eyed stranger fling benches aside as he followed.

Out on the street Taro kicked off his wooden sandals. "Head them off!" he shouted to Jiro who had sprung out of a shadow. "I'll get to the quarantine station and tell the doctor, somehow."

Out rushed the one-eyed stranger and made straight after Taro. But Jiro jumped in front of the crowd that came piling out behind him. "This way! This way!" Jiro shrieked, and took to his heels down the opposite alley. Without stopping to think, the crowd followed, kicking off sandals to run better. It was many rods farther before they discovered their mistake. Disgustedly they trailed back to pick up their sandals. But Jiro, panting, noticed that the fruit dealer and Danpachi had both disappeared.

Taro's stocking feet seemed to have wings. The quarantine station with its port officers was two miles away. Taro knew what would happen to him if he were caught. The docks — there, always, a rikisha man or two would be waiting for a chance passenger. So straight for the docks he made. Suddenly the familiar wharf sheds loomed into sight out of the mist. Two jinrikishas and two sleepy runners leaning against the shed wall! Taro dashed up to one and vaulted over the rubber-tired wheel.

"Twice the fare if you get me to the quarantine station!" he panted to the astounded runner.

Sensing something unusual, the man stepped lithely between the shafts and started westward in a short, steady jog. A few seconds later Taro heard the second rikisha start.



Taro's feet seemed to have wings.

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"Three times the fare!" he shouted, grasping the sides and leaning frantically forward. "If they catch me, they'll kill me!"

The man nodded in assurance. His stride lengthened, and gradually the distance between the rikishas increased.

After what seemed an hour to Taro—really less than twenty minutes—the runner halted in front of a square building, shrouded in salty fog. Only one room was lighted. Taro's heart missed a beat. Was the quarantine station closed so early in the evening? He jumped out and ran to the door, beating his hands against it.

"They come, young master," called the rikisha man.

Taro gave a last desperate shake to the door handle. The door opened. He slipped past the startled watchman and pulled the door shut on the shouts of the one-eyed stranger. "Quick! Is the doctor here?" he demanded breathlessly. "I must see him!"

Half an hour later he was saying good-by to the keen-eyed Port Health Officer himself, who had been working late over the usual Wednesday report to be sent to Singapore for the Friday broadcast and cable to Geneva. He had told his story. First the doctor had ordered the arrest of the one-eyed stranger and paid off Taro's faithful runner. Then, seated at the desk in his little office, he had drafted a code message to be cabled at once to the port officer at Shanghai warning him of the cholera-infected orange junk due the next day. Taro had watched him, burning with curiosity to know what he said. Now, as he left, in the boy's pocket was tucked a carefully folded paper, for the doctor, greatly pleased at his interest, had given him a copy of his code message.

They stood at the door waiting for the doctor's own jin-rikisha which was to take the boy safely home.

"When you finish your medical course and are ready for

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a man's work, come to me, Taro Hara," the doctor said smiling at him. "You are going to be a man worthy of your ancestors."

"It was Jiro, sir," Taro replied humbly, wishing his chum were there. "He found the man first."

"It was both of you!" the doctor answered. "This thing that you have done was more than boys' play. You have saved lives here in Kobe — perhaps in Shanghai — more lives than any of us can tell. Say to your friend Jiro that we at the quarantine station are proud of you two boys and are grateful to you both."

"Thank you, honorable sir," Taro replied, controlling a happiness that made him want to shout. Bowing politely, he climbed into the doctor's rikisha.

Half an hour later with his precious "Double A" code book under his arm, Taro was running across Yamamoto Dori. Jiro was waiting for him at the door and welcomed him eagerly.

"What happened? Did you get there in time? Tell me quickly?" Excited questions one after another.

"Wait! Look!" cried Taro waving his treasured bit of folded paper. "Here's the message the doctor sent. Now for what it says!"

The boys dropped cross-legged on a mat; opening the thin red code book, they read together by the light of a big silk lantern the already familiar instructions for decoding messages.

"To de-code, all letters A must first be struck out (also UA if following a Q), and the message is then read off in pairs of letters from the beginning with the help of the two-letter symbols and their phrase — meaning listed in this code book."

Taro carefully unfolded the quarantine doctor's message. Four words only. But such peculiar-looking ones!

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GEBAFBABIO | QUAPALAMAQ
AZARATIHRA | JAKAVGAEA

Quickly the boys crossed off each A and UA and jotted down the remaining letters in pairs. After a few minutes, search of the alphabetically arranged lists, Taro dictated to Jiro the translation of each symbol.

GE, Kobe
BF, 4th Saturday in the year
BB, The message which follows is of a special nature
IO, Siamese
QP, Coolie-ship
LM, Cholera
QZ, Crew's quarters
RT, Her next port is
IH, Shanghai
RJ, Ship has not been dealt with here, take action to quarantine her
KV, Signed Port Health Officer of
GE, Kobe

"That's a good code!" Jiro yawned admiringly. Taro nodded, sleepy but satisfied with the most exciting adventure the two friends had ever had.

FALCON FEATHERS

KARLA looked up quickly, a drop of unexpected rain on her cheek. A bulging gray cloud seemed to be resting almost on the tops of the oak trees overarching the forest path; it must have been blown from Poland over the high Tatra Mountains that rimmed the beautiful Czechoslovakian valley. She frowned. Rain would spoil the May picnic which celebrated her brother's fifteenth birthday.

"Shall we go back to the castle with the others, Duro?" she called to the long-legged boy ahead of her, who carried a walking stick and wore a stiff falcon feather in his cap.

Her brother turned at a fork in the path and waited, looking approvingly at his black-eyed young sister with a brilliant flowered scarf binding her black braids and a red embroidered apron gay against her snowy blouse and black skirt. "Come on," he replied. "I know of a shepherd's hut near here at the edge of the forest."

"But won't the other Sokols think we are lost?" Karla objected. The other nine members of the Sokol Club on their annual picnic from the Czechoslovakian village of Nishka had preferred to stay at the old castle after lunch, setting up hurdles and high jumps, while Karla and Duro went to explore more of the Javorina Forest that covered most of the wide-spreading valley.

"Why should they think we are lost?" Duro laughed. "Did you ever hear of a 'falcon' losing his way?" He lightly

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touched the feather on his cap, symbol of the international club to which they belonged. "Come on."

He ran lightly down one of the forks in the trail, Karla close at his heels. Neither of them noticed the swift-piling clouds, nor did Duro speak until a jagged flare of lightning zigzagged down the lead-colored sky to the north, followed almost instantly by a crash of thunder that hurled itself from one mountain ravine to another. "The shelter should be near here," he volunteered uneasily, as he ran peering through the feathery hemlocks to their right that marked the edge of the forest and the beginning of the stony mountain pasture land.

"Well, we can keep on until we find it," Karla panted cheerfully, bending her head under a sudden torrent of rain.

Every song bird and wild animal in the Javorina Forest Preserve was hid. For half an hour they jogged on in drenched clothes and soggy shoes. The trail narrowed and began to be choked with underbrush. Karla noticed silently that there was not a familiar mark anywhere. From time to time Duro gave a woodsman's halloo, answered only by thunder that was slowly growling its way south.

All at once Karla spied a little hut to the left and a small pile of lumbered trees.

"Wood cutters?" she motioned to Duro.

"Yes, but not ours," he answered, looking at them. "Our choppers don't come so far beyond the castle." He gave another halloo and listened.

This time an answering shout came from the path ahead. Then Karla saw a second long-legged young woodsman coming rapidly up the trail. Duro waved his cap, and Karla gave him a frank, friendly look — the feather in his cap was also a falcon feather.

"Dobry den!" called Duro in greeting.

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"Good-day yourself!" laughed the stranger as he took in their draggled appearance. He doffed his cap to Karla with a quick, embarrassed little gesture. "We heard your shouts from my grandmother's farm and I came to find out who was lost so near our Zakopany road."

"Zakopany!" Karla exclaimed. "Then we are near the frontier line."

"You crossed into Poland when you entered the Javorina Valley," the stranger replied courteously but firmly, as they fell into step beside him.

Duro and Karla glanced at each other. The valley belonged to Czechoslovakia, not to Poland; everybody in Nishka knew that. Even here, with the one who had rescued them, must they carry on the old quarrel that their father and the other grown-ups in Nishka had fed on for eight years?

After an uncomfortable silence, the stranger turned to Karla with a resolute smile. "My name is Jan," he informed her. "Wanda, my sister, and my small brother Stanislas and I live with our grandmother. You will come and dry yourself at our house? My grandmother would welcome you."

Again the brother and sister exchanged glances. Jan was more than a stranger, after all; he was a symbol of the quarrel. It seemed almost like treachery to Nishka for them to accept his offer. For an instant Karla hung back. Then she caught the hurt look in Jan's eyes. Impulsively she touched his arm. "Your grandmother is kind," she said warmly; "and we will come with many thanks."

Jan looked relieved. "Some day you must come to visit our Zakopany Sokol," he said. "We are falcons too." He touched the little bronze pin on his coat, so much like the ones Karla and Duro wore. While the boys fell into talk about the forest trails, Karla walked in silence. A new idea

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came to her, thinking over what the schoolmaster in Nishka, leader of their Sokol Club, had said when he had given them their pins.

"Sokol means 'falcon,' the bird that flies highest and most fearlessly," he had said. "So you must train yourself toward high ideals. In these games and races that we compete in so often, you are training three things: your body, so that we may have a strong, clean nation; your mind, that you may judge quickly and surely; and your spirit, that you may be good sportsmen, generous when you win a race, cheerful when you knock down the hurdles and lose, honest to the rules even when the judge of the contest is not watching you. This feather which the boys are to wear will always remind you of your promise, which is written on this pin — 'Na strazh,' 'On guard'!"

"If we keep this valley," Karla added to herself, "we must be generous; and if we lose it, cheerful. It's all part of being a 'falcon.'"

Jan's voice interrupted her thoughts. They had come to the main road that led away from Javorina toward Zakopany. The forest had gradually smoothed into a rolling green meadow, with mountains for walls and a tumbling river now churned white with the rain. Close by the road stood a small thatch-roofed farmhouse toward which Jan was waving his hand.

"Our farm," he said simply. Behind the house a nine-year-old boy was driving a cow into an old barn. He stood staring at them with dark, unsmiling eyes. On the threshold of the house itself Karla saw a girl about her own age, fourteen years, and a big-boned old woman whose deep-set eyes looked out gravely from under a white scarf.

"Here are two Sokols, from over the frontier," Jan announced, leading Duro and Karla up to them.

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Karla felt, rather than saw, a shadow pass over the girl's face, to disappear quickly in a welcoming smile.

"Come in, come in," the old woman beside her said with a grave, yet friendly look at Karla's sagging skirt and Duro's water-soaked jacket.

A little later Duro and Karla stood again at the door, bidding good-by to their new-found friends. Duro wore an old woolen coat and trousers of Jan's, and Karla had on Wanda's second-best dress and scarf. Under Duro's arm was a damp-looking bundle. They were grateful, and yet they were glad to leave. For they had felt an unspoken resentment in all the grandmother's hospitality.

"As you walk back to your friends at the castle," the old woman said to them in place of good-by, barring the doorway with her arm for a moment, "think of the thousands of trees in Javorina Forest that Polish, not Czech, woodsmen have been planting for nigh on eight hundred years! And when you eat your next bread over the frontier, remember that your last bite was taken at a Polish table. What are all your man-made boundaries, when you remember that we belong there?" She gripped Duro's arm and looked searchingly at him.

Duro's eyes sought his sister's. Somehow he did not feel so proud of his father's hot argument that the valley was legally their own, according to the treaty after the war. He bowed to the old woman. "I will not forget," he said a little stiffly. Then, waving his hand to the somber Stanislas standing beside the grandmother, he turned. Wanda and Karla walked arm in arm down the road in the deepening rose-purple glow of sunset, while Jan and Duro strolled behind them. Jan carried a rough woodsman's lantern, which he handed over to Duro a mile farther on, as he and Wanda turned to go back.

"You'll reach your friends at the castle in two hours' time,"

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he said. The two boys halted, looking steadily but questioningly into each other's eyes a moment. Unconsciously in both of them surged up echoes of the hot quarrel between their elders concerning this same twilight-flooded valley where they had found each other friendly.

At that moment they heard Wanda say: "Yes, Karla; whenever you send the message, I'll visit you."

That seemed to break a sort of tension, and the four said good-by.

In the two hours' time the returned wanderers sighted the ivied walls of the old hunting castle, and halloosed to dark figures gathered in front of the stables. Somebody had hitched up the two big wagons for the trip home through the moon-lighted pass southward. "No, we weren't exactly lost," Duro explained amid shouts of laughter from the teasing crowd.

"And you really w-w-went inside their house?" whispered fat Zuzanna to Karla, squeezed beside her in the front seat with the driver. "Wh-what did you have for s-supper? And what will your father s-say?"

Karla, with a sinking heart, thought she knew what he would say. And she was right. Not that night, when he kissed her and said he was glad she was not wandering still in the forest, but at breakfast the next morning, when, after a night of reflection, he looked around at his comfortable house, his cheerful wife and the four children.

Then Karla heard every argument she had heard before: "the old international boundary set by law must not be changed"; "let the Polish wood choppers stay out of our forests"; "our cows need pasture land too." Then he closed the affair, bringing his fist down with quiet determination. "This is no village quarrel, Karla. It is our nation's. Did we win back our independence five years ago, only to have

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our frontiers whittled away for somebody else's benefit? God is our witness that we want no more fighting. But unless our statesmen, or the League of Nations, can find some way to settle the quarrel soon, we may have it," he ended gravely, his black mustache bristling but his eyes dark with anxiety.

"Jan says . . ." ventured Duro.

His father rose from the table. "Never let me hear their names again!" he exclaimed in exasperation. "Anton the forest warden shall take back those borrowed clothes. You are never again to enter that Polish house."

"But I asked Wanda . . ." Karla began in dismay.

"It is school time, Karla," her mother interrupted briefly. Karla gave up in despair. "I'll have to wait," she decided to herself.

Busy days in the village school followed. Karla, Duro and six others took final examinations, graduated, and began summer work in earnest. Duro and Andrej became apprentices on their fathers' farms; two of the girls studied how to run a home, under their mothers; Zuzanna learned dress-making with her aunt; and Karla took up embroidery. She learned design too, especially the rose, tulip and vine, famous national emblems which appear on dresses, household linen, even on the painted walls and carved wooden furniture of nearly every home in Slovakia. For hours she sat at the big wooden frame on which her first table scarf was stretched.

In the hot summer that came and the crisp autumn that followed, Karla saw very little of the other Sokols except in church and at the weekly meetings. Every Wednesday afternoon the girls gathered in her father's barn, sometimes to fence, sometimes to sing, more often to set up hurdles and high-jump poles in the yard outside. Quite often Duro and the other boys held their games with them. Then they would gather on a Saturday afternoon for a meet in the

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poplar-lined square in front of the village church, and the grown-ups would sit in the shade and watch.

By November, Karla had become the best high jumper among the girls. But at the last meeting before bad weather set in, Marka, her closest rival, had cleared the bar once at Karla's record, four feet two inches. The mud that resulted from an early snow spoiled the last meet. It was voted to wait until spring before running the final contest.

"Let's make that a big event in May and invite a Sokol Club from another village!" somebody suggested, to unanimous applause. "We can send the challenge in April."

Then the autumn rains began and the work on the farm lands was over until spring. The men and boys sat indoors around the tidy white porcelain stoves, carving things out of wood — jugs, plate racks and benches. It seemed to Karla that as they talked the dispute over the valley to the north became hotter than ever before. More than once she noticed the younger children about Nishka imitating the same tones of disgust, anger or jealousy, when they quoted remarks they had heard at home. Karla began to wonder if her father was not right, after all. But the warm memory of Wanda's smile and the light of Jan's lantern that had led them back to the castle would not leave her.

It happened that about Christmas time the snow lay so even and shining-topped that Duro suggested a toboggan party. The next Saturday, therefore, while the peaks of the mountains were still pink in the rising sun, a tinkling cavalcade left Nishka for the long, open slopes of the Javorina Valley. The schoolmaster was in charge of the party of five boys and six girls. In four sleighs, with silver bells hung from wooden yokes that arched high over the horses' necks, they skimmed over the pass and down through the forest. Karla forgot everything for the beauty around them — deer

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tracks, fat white-and-brown snow birds, the gray-and-black loveliness of tree trunks rising from the white ground, the feathery layers of snow on dark branches of spruce and fir outlined against the blue sky. But as they neared the particular slopes chosen, her heart began to beat faster under her sheep-skin jacket as she wondered if Wanda and Jan ever came there to coast. What would happen if they were already in possession?

The slopes were empty, however. Choosing a little hollow, the schoolmaster halted the sleighs, toboggans and sleds were unlashd, and the packages of food were stacked in a clearing. The sleighs were driven away by the hired men to the castle stables, to wait the schoolmaster's horn recalling them. The boys quickly collected a pile of brushwood.

Then the schoolmaster waved them off. "When I blow this horn twice, come back for dinner," he said.

Duro and Andrej, racing up the nearest hill, threw themselves on their toboggan and, by the time Karla and the other girls had reached the top of the slope, were a quarter of a mile distant at its foot.

The day was perfect for coasting. In spite of a cold wind that bit through mittens and mufflers, the Sokols wandered happily over various ridges, trying new hills. All at once Zuzanna, exploring by herself, called out: "Somebody has built a s-slide over here!"

Hurrying over, they found a regular toboggan slide built with carefully packed snow which had softened and then frozen into ice. At a sharp turn part way down where it curved to the left, it had been banked up. It was narrow, smooth and thoroughly inviting.

"Here's for the first go!" cried Andrej, drawing up his toboggan.

Before he could throw himself on it, a voice behind them shouted: "Stop! It's too dangerous!"



The day was perfect for coasting.

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The Nishka party wheeled to look at the intruder.

There came six figures over the crest, Jan, followed by four other boys of his own age and Stanislas. Karla flushed a hot red, and Duro stared. Jan saw them and took off his falcon-feathered cap in the quick, embarrassed salute Karla remembered. For a moment no one spoke. Then Andrej kicked his toboggan into place.

"What are the Sokols from Zakopany across the border doing on our hills!" he growled.

Jan sprang forward and jerked the toboggan to one side.

"I tell you, that slide is dangerous!" he exclaimed. "I know, because I planned it and the curve needs more banking. One of our boys got hurt there last week."

Andrej faced him. "What are you doing in Javorina?" he demanded.

"It's ours!" Jan retorted.

"You lie!"

"Come on and prove it!" Jan flashed back, peeling off his gloves and tossing his cap on the snow. There was silence in the ring of startled figures around them.

"Oh, don't fight!" Karla cried suddenly, dreading the bitterness in their voices. "Duro, make Andrej stop!"

One of the Polish boys thrust out his foot and tripped Duro as he stepped forward.

"Yah!" sniffed little Polish Stanislas in derision. "Make him stop!"

"Oh, Jan, it won't do any good to fight!" Karla almost wailed.

Jan, his hair tossed back in the wind, his square jaw set, stopped short and looked at her. "No . . . it won't," he said after a pause.

"It'll s-spoil our whole d-d-day!" stuttered Zuzanna.

Jan looked hesitatingly at Andrej.

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"Anyhow, Duro and I know you're not a liar!" Karla added defiantly. Jan looked at Duro, remembering clearly that friendly meeting after the thunderstorm in May. Slowly the hard look left his face and with a shrug of his shoulders he stooped for his cap. Including them all with a sweep of his arm, he commanded rather than suggested: "Let's all coast over there. When we get this banked up properly, you can come back and use this one." With relief, they all turned with him.

Karla looked back over her shoulder for a moment at the glistening track. "Oh, let's try this, just once!" she exclaimed impulsively. "You can tell us how to do it."

"Duro is the only one who could do it safely because he is the oldest," Jan explained. "I'll let him take one try at it before we go home." Then he placed his toboggan on the next hill, and motioned Karla to get on.

Instinctively, Karla hesitated a second. Then, with a quick lift of the chin she seated herself. It seemed so silly to be quarreling with these nice-faced boys, up here in the snow at Christmas time! Everyone else followed them — everyone but Stanislas, whom Karla noticed standing sourly by the gleaming slide. Soon the air was full of laughter and shouting, and time flew. The dinner horn surprised them.

"Jan, you haven't forgotten what you promised me?" Duro remarked, walking over to the top of the glistening track. Karla, following, saw with surprise Stanislas pulling his way laboriously up the slippery snow beside the track. A queer, eager look was in his eyes as, still quite a distance down, he heard Jan reply.

"No, but don't, on your life, forget to throw your weight to the left at that curve, or you will jump the edge and crash into those fir trees."

Karla, her light sled dragging behind her, walked a few

steps down beside the track and stood looking eagerly up at the boys. All at once she saw Jan shake his head as Duro pulled his toboggan into place: "I don't dare to let you go alone," he decided. "Honestly, it's too tricky. I'm going with you the first time."

He motioned Duro to lie on his stomach and stooped over him, grasping the edges of the toboggan with both hands.

Suddenly Karla was aware of Stanislas stumbling frantically toward her. By some queer trick of the wind, she heard him breathe to himself as clearly as if he had said it in her ear: "And I put that branch at the curve to kill Duro!"

She shot a look at the boy. He was deathly pale. Just as Jan gave a great shove, she realized what would happen. Without a second thought, she grasped her sled in both hands. With a running start, she threw herself on it in the middle of the track ahead of the toboggan. Duro and Jan, seeing her appear in front of them, tried desperately to dig their toes in and stop the toboggan, but it was too late. With horror in his eyes as they gathered speed, Duro stared over the curved front of the toboggan at his sister flying down the chute ahead of them. He saw the rush of wind rip off her sheepskin cap and set her blue muffler streaming behind her.

"We'll hit her! Why was she so crazy!" he groaned, and shut his eyes.

"Hold on!" yelled Jan in his ear. "The instant we touch the curve throw yourself hard to the left. We may save her yet."

The toboggan reached the curve . . . Jan's weight shifted violently . . . something sharp scraped Duro's cheek . . . and they swerved back into the middle of the track beyond the bend, and tore breathlessly on for another third of a mile. No sign of Karla. The boys rolled off before they came to a

stop, and plowed their way back through the snow beside the icy slide.

"What happened?" Duro panted. "Did we hit her?"

"I don't know," Jan replied briefly. "There's blood on your cheek."

Duro smudged it off with his sleeve.

By the time they reached the curve, they saw the edge broken away where Karla's sled had plunged through. The wrecked sled itself lay in a small clump of trees below. Marka and three of the boys were bending over Karla, who had been tossed to one side, her left arm hugging a rough branch that she had apparently clutched at as she fell. Her eyes were shut, but tears were streaming down her quivering face.

"Where is she hurt?" Duro asked quickly, stooping over her.

"It's her leg — I think it's broken," Marka answered.

Jan without a word ran back for the toboggan, and someone else went to bring the schoolmaster. By the time he arrived, Duro had contrived a splint from a piece of the sled and bound it to the broken leg with his muffler. With the schoolmaster's help, they eased Karla onto the toboggan and pulled it around the slope to the clearing. Three sharp blasts of the horn called the sleighs.

"Wouldn't it be better to take her to my grandmother's house near here? The doctor from Zakopany could come," Jan asked anxiously.

"Mother!" moaned Karla as if in answer.

"Thanks, but we'll go home," the schoolmaster said, taking off his coat and wrapping her in it. "Now, somebody, how did this happen?"

Nobody knew. Duro told how utterly surprised he was at seeing her appear in front of them. Finally Jan admitted unhappily that she had earlier asked for a ride down that slide.

"I'm cold, I want to go home," Stanislas broke in restlessly.

They stared somberly at him. The joy of the day was gone. Everybody felt cold and impatient to get away. Silently they watched the schoolmaster and the three drivers lash the toboggan across two seats in one of the sleighs and tuck heavy sheepskin rugs around Karla. It was a sober little party that drove off through the leafless forest trail, with mocking bells jingling at every step of the horses. Jan stood watching them for a moment.

"I don't understand," he muttered.

No one in Nishka understood, either. During the first few days of intense pain while the bone was set and placed in rigid splints, Karla had waited to hear those around her tell her they were proud of her bravery. But no one did. In fact, they seemed to avoid the subject when they came to sit by her bed. Only her father said once, his hand stroking her hot head:

"Karla, when will you learn to control your impulses?"

It dawned on her then. They did not understand at all. They did not know that she had gone down the slide to try to push off the deadly branch which Stanislas had put on the curve to wreck Duro's toboggan. She thought it out painfully one night when she could not go to sleep. No one else had heard Stanislas speak, and evidently he had been too afraid to confess. She felt angry at first, but the anger passed.

"I can't tell on a nine-year-old even if he is a Pole. Let them think what they like," she decided with a touch of scorn. "But, oh, what the other Sokols must think of me!" Her scorn melted into tears, for she was still very weak.

It was a bad break, and the doctor looked grave when Karla asked him how soon she could walk. For five weeks she lay flat on the high-posted bed in her room that faced toward the mountains. Then for six weeks, her leg still in splints, she

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hobbled around on crutches, or sat at her embroidery frame. Her mother had invited the girls to hold their Sokol meetings in her house, however, and Karla began to think about the track meet to be held in May.

To her complete discouragement, the doctor shook his shaggy head, "No racing for you until September, Karolina Hubka," he said. "Remember — 'a sound body,' you impatient young falcon." And even while he was saying it, Marka was clearing the high jump at Karla's own record. To add to her depression, a dispute arose in the club early in April as to whom they should send their challenge. The boys insisted on inviting a club to the east, and the girls preferred another to the south. Karla, as president, could not see how to settle the matter. So there were several nights during that month when she lay awake for hours, watching the Great Dipper swing its seven stars up from the east and poise over the Javorina Valley. Little by little the great constellation seemed to pour a spirit of peace around her; it seemed so steadfast, so serene, and it shone alike on Czech and Polish mountains. More and more her thoughts left her own troubles and wandered over to the Polish farm beyond. One night a new realization came to her.

"I'll get over my broken leg in a few months. But Stanislas will never forget how mean he was," she reasoned to herself. "Poor little fellow! He only did it because people had taught him to hate us, for he is too young to make up his own mind!"

Finally the end of April was in sight, the last chance to send the challenge. And it so happened that one night she suddenly found a solution. The races had come to seem to her so small an affair, and the need to be friends with Wanda, Jan and the others — even Stanislas — seemed so much more important.

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"If only we could invite the Zakopany Sokol!" it flashed over her.

The next morning she asked Duro about it privately. He hesitated, then nodded. "Though we can't do it while father and the others are so upset," he warned. But Karla had a feeling that, like her broken leg, the dispute over the valley must be settled some time, and she was willing to wait.

And she was right. The Javorina Valley dispute was coming to an end. Just in time for the sending of the challenge, too.

One noon her father sat down at the dinner table, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

"When two people can't agree," he began, "the only sensible thing for them to do is to get a judge to decide for them. Now that is just what we and Poland have done. We went to the League, and because this Javorina affair is partly a question of law, they sent the case to the World Court. Thanks to the advice of the Court, they gave the valley to us!"

"Tell us about it!" Karla urged eagerly. "Does this Court belong to us?"

"It belongs to us and to fifty-one other nations, too," he said. "It meets in Holland, in a great courthouse at The Hague."

"What do they know about us?" Duro asked.

"Just as our own court at Prague studies questions of law between our own people, this World Court, when it is asked, studies questions of law between nations, then gives advice, or settles these questions. That is why it is called the 'World' Court — that, and because it has eleven judges chosen from different countries. Both Poland and ourselves felt that we had to get this Javorina matter settled, so when the League asked the Court for its advice, we both told the League we would accept its decision. This is a fair decision, because

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the Court studied both sides of the matter for weeks before it sent its advice."

Karla shot a triumphant smile at Duro. "Now we can invite them!" the smile meant. Then her face sobered. She suddenly realized that this decision had more to deal with than a matter of a track meet. It dealt with Jan's grandmother whose family had planted part of the forest — it dealt with the wood cutters who earned their living there.

"What will the Polish peasants do?" she asked thoughtfully. "Can they still use the valley?"

For answer, her father drew a newspaper clipping from his pocket. "Read that!" he said. Karla, with Duro looking over her shoulder, read how the governments of both countries had agreed between themselves that the Polish peasants should keep their farms and have free daily passes over the border to carry on their work in the valley.

"We've decided to make Javorina Forest into one of our big national parks," her father added as he rose to go. "A great new park free to everyone."

"'A friend in the house is God in the House,'" Karla softly quoted one of their old Czechoslovakian proverbs as she handed back the clipping.

The next day she called a special meeting of the Sokols. Explaining what she and Duro had learned, she asked them if they would like to send the challenge to Zakopany, and added, "We won't invite them unless every one of you wants them and will be nice to them." She looked straight at Andrej as she spoke.

He tossed aside a stick he was whittling. "Oh, I don't care. Let them come," he gave in finally.

And so it happened that one glorious day late in May twenty families from Nishka spread their basket lunches under the great oaks near Javorina Castle. They were wait-

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ing, with a mixture of feelings, for the Polish neighbors — neighbors with whom they had quarreled for six years. As Karla watched her father pacing up and down in deep thought, she caught a little of his suspense. What would everybody say and do? What should she say to Wanda?

But when their guests appeared — twelve young Polish Sokols swinging easily down the road, followed by four or five wagon loads of their parents — the suspense ended. There was only one thing to say.

"Welcome, Zakopany!" shouted the whole Nishka party.

"Welcome, Nishka!" returned the Polish newcomers, waving their caps and scarves. Karla threw her arms around Wanda without a word.

The games and races were scheduled first. Karla, sitting beside her mother, watched Marka skim light as a bird over a higher jump than she had yet made. A sudden pang of the old hurt struck her. "Why couldn't it have been I?" Karla asked herself for a wretched moment as Marka received one of the winning ribbons when it was all over. But in the next ten minutes something happened that swept forever out of her mind the races and the whole winter's unhappiness.

Jan came up with Duro to where they were preparing lunch, and called Stanislas to join them as they seated themselves. The boy came so unwillingly that Karla looked up at him. "Poor old Stanislas!" she cried impulsively at sight of his face, as he joined them. "It's all right! Don't worry any more!" She held out her hand.

The boy stood still in his tracks in amazement at Karla's friendliness. Then he astonished himself and everyone else by pouring out the whole story of the accident on the toboggan slide — his hatred of Czechs, his putting a branch on the dangerous curve to wreck the Czech toboggan, his brother's danger, and Karla's quick understanding of what

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he had done. The rest of the story did not have to be told — Karla was surrounded, shy and embarrassed. Duro, her mother, her aunt, everybody looking at her in wonder and pride. Wanda's eyes shone; but Karla kept insisting over and over: "It was nothing — it was nothing."

Jan rose, and crossing to her, stood in front of her. "How can you say it was nothing?" he said slowly. "I think it is the finest thing I have ever heard of a girl doing. This ought to belong to you. Please take it!"

Karla with glowing eyes watched him unfasten the falcon feather from his cap.

"To a true falcon," he said as he handed it to her.

HAIL, CHIEF

Koos the Hottentot rolled over restlessly on his grass mat in his father's stuffy mud hut. The dream was not pleasant. In it, Mynheer, the farmer whose sheep he tended on the veld, had just inquired for the lamb Koos had stolen from the flock.

"Twenty stripes for that!" old Mynheer seemed to be shouting, raising a heavy knotted cord to lay across the boy's brown back.

"Naa, Mynheer!" Koos muttered aloud in his dreams. "You cannot strike me any longer — our new white rulers from the south forbid it; you must take me to their white judge in the village!"

Just then a silvery ray of African moonlight threaded its way through branches outside, found the square little window of the hut and touched the sleeper's eyes. With catlike wariness, Koos sat up, wide awake.

"Mynheer doesn't know about that lamb!" he realized quickly, finding himself safe in his tribal reservation with his three younger brothers asleep on the grass mats beside him. For a confused second, he was surprised not to be sleeping as usual in the shepherd hut on Mynheer's farm miles outside the loosely guarded Hottentot Reservation. Then he remembered the stealthy message that had brought him, and fifty others, from outlying farms, one midnight earlier —

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and remembering, he rose, again catlike, to his feet and stole to the low doorway.

Just the right hour! The half-moon hung as if caught in the gnarled spikes of an old camel-thorn tree to his left, and already three silent figures were standing in the twisted shadow. From the hard-packed, silent veld of Southwest Africa that stretched around were appearing other figures, their ragged trousers flapping their knees, bronze shoulders bare to the moon. A starved, savage dog loped at the heels of one. Soon a dozen were there, waiting. It seemed to Koos that all his tribe did was to wait for stealthy messages that came only when the white police sergeant, who had uttered the threat of death, slept — the white police sergeant and the white superintendent of the reserve, the one forty miles away in the city, the other behind the bolted door of his bungalow in the heart of the Bondel Hottentot Tribal Reserve.

At last Babab arrived, tall, lean, the iduana, or headman, of their kraal, Koos' uncle. In ten seconds, the waiting figures had vanished in the native trot that covers ten miles to the hour, following an almost invisible trail. The old camel-thorn tree stood alone, clutching toward the slipping moon with branches as crooked as the fingers of a native witch doctor.

Half an hour later the runners emerged from the flat, low veld into a small river course running between two ridges of crags. Koos made out a cluster of pontoks — mud huts — squatting ahead of them in the valley. Reaching the silent huts, Babab halted. Turning abruptly to one side, he herded his followers together in front of the largest pontok, shadowed by overhanging thatched eaves. Motionless on either side of the entrance were two mounted men, guarding the

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headquarters of Jacobus Christian, the man for whom Koos and all of them had been secretly recalled from the farms — the man who by rights should long ago have been proclaimed by the white men the true tribal chief of the Bondel Hot-tentots.

“Already they carry guns!” whispered Koos to his uncle.

“Hsst!” hissed one of the horsemen, unslinging his carbine. Koos slunk back.

Just then another iduana and his men appeared from an opposite path, and the guards motioned them all to a clear patch of moonlight at the side of the pontok. Band after band of runners emerged from the trails whose spoor only the keenest-eyed guards could follow. Three hundred men, and boys his own age — from all four corners of the reserve! Koos felt a shiver of excitement run down his spine as he sat silently on the rough, caked earth.

When the circling rows of brown shoulders had settled into place, the door of the pontok swung open. Two men came out and were escorted by the horsemen into their midst. One of the two was a stranger to Koos; but to the other, older, a little stooped, the waiting natives rose as one man and crouched silently in the salute given only to chieftains. Then they squatted in a silent, massed circle.

As if by signal, Babab rose. “The head of the family of Isaacs is here, oh, Chief,” he reported.

Another iduana took it up. “The head of the family of Pienaar is here,” he said. Village after village reported, the century-old Dutch names of the original white settlers for whom their forebears had worked, ringing strangely from their native throats.

“And where is Iduana Klaas?” demanded the chief.

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Somebody replied with hesitation: "He sits in the white man's jail house because he drinks; and his son, who will not work, sits with him."

"We have no longer any tribal law or honor!" one iduana broke in bitterly. "Since our tribe was scattered, it is brandy for our old men who should be making our laws, and idleness for our young men, who should become our fighting men. So it will be, as long as the tribe has not its own chieftain — our hearts are like a water hole with no water."

"Of what good was it to us that our old masters have changed for new?" broke in another lean-faced man with a cruel scar of an old whip-lash across his chest. "We are not given the only good we desire — you, Jacobus Christian, made our true chief!"

A movement of assent stirred the kraal men.

The chief rose swiftly to his feet to quiet them.

"We were punished by our old masters because we rebelled," he said evenly. "Our new white iduanas from South Africa have given us land of our own, cattle for each man, and a white judge instead of the lash of the sjambok whip."

"We would drink less brandy and be less idle if we had our own true chief to obey," the first iduana muttered sullenly. "We Hottentots need no masters. We are 'the men of men,' and we should be one strong tribe. Why are there strangers on the farms our fathers tilled? Why must we pay a tax for each dog which helps us guard our cattle?"

At the murmur that again swept the rows of restless men, the chief raised his hand. "I, your lawful chief, tell you this. The white man of South Africa is your friend; he will never leave, so we must learn his laws."

He paused and looked around the silent moonlit circles. Then with lowered voice, he continued. "But as the white

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man does not understand our tribal yearning for a chief of the line of chiefs, we must teach him this one thing." The men could just hear him. "And so you are here while the white iduana sleeps. Our plans have been discovered! We must gather our fighting men."

Here he pointed to his companion, and his voice rose. "We have called our Kapitein Morris from his exile across the Orange River to be our leader. He is to be obeyed as you would obey me."

The chief sat down. The bronzed bodies of his listeners swayed forward.

Lithe, square-shouldered, Morris stood up. "What your chief says is true; our plans have been discovered. But there is still a choice," he said simply. "It is this. Because I brought sixteen rifles and five men with me from across the river, the white police sergeant tried to arrest us, and when he failed, declared that our tribe would be put to death because we had not surrendered. Perhaps he lied. But already in the city beyond the reservation the white men are gathering with horses and guns. However, twice their officers have sent messages, saying that if I, Kapitein Morris, am given up and the five men with me and the sixteen rifles, the tribe itself will not be punished. There is yet time for us to go to them. What do you wish?"

An immediate stir of anger went through the kraal men, intently listening. But then a silence followed. Koos' heart jumped to his throat. Would they betray this man, who had come to help them!

"If you are in jail, who will win us back our chief?" called one iduana hopelessly.

In the despair that settled over them, Babab suddenly rose and swept his arms above his head. "Lead us!" he cried. "Fighting men, stand!"

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The tense moment was over. Every man and boy sprang to his feet.

"Good!" said Morris quietly. "Then let us prepare, for even the Great White Iduana of all the territory has come himself, and sleeps in the city. We need more guns. Do thirty of you with Adam Pienaar ride the next night to the outlying farms and take those which stand in the houses of the white farmers. Let you," and he turned directly to Koos, "take ten other boys from your kraal and hunt on the high veld, until the second moonrise, for the boxes of cartridges which we buried there five years back. Let all the iduanas collect their women and children and cattle and bring them here to this water hole. And when all is done, at the third moonrise, let every fighting man assemble here with me."

The terrible seriousness of the plan was beginning to penetrate their understanding. Morris paused and waited, eyeing the grave faces before him. Suddenly, as by one impulse, the iduanas sprang to their feet and crouched around him in silent salute and complete obedience.

"Good!" he said again, with sharp satisfaction.

Then he turned with the chief and the two reëntered the pontok noiselessly. The men broke circle, and following their leaders, vanished down the dim trails in the waning moonlight. As he ran, Koos cast one glance back at the chief's pontok. Two solitary horsemen were slowly patrolling the empty clearing, and somewhere beyond the water hole, a jackal's wail rose and fell. Everything else seemed asleep.

But the Great White Iduana was not asleep. Down in the city, forty miles away, he was puzzling, as he leaned over a military map, how he might bring back order without spilling the blood of his unhappy brown tribesmen, or yielding to them in the matter of the hated dog tax.

"Poor beggars!" he thought, compassionate but provoked.

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"If they fight, they can keep us at bay for months on those hills of theirs. There is only one way to end it quickly and mercifully — we must give them a severe and lasting lesson, and scare them into surrender."

So even before Koos reached his kraal, to dream of loading and firing the first rifle he had ever touched, the Administrator of the Mandated Territory of Southwest Africa had sent a telegram to the South African Government asking that two bombing airplanes, machine guns and three hundred and fifty soldiers be held in readiness for his use.

Two days later, Koos and the other boys of his kraal trailed for hot miles over the high veld, with a few strips of biltong, native sun-dried meat, in their pockets. They dug with sharp stones wherever they discovered the curiously built little piles of rock that marked the hiding places of the buried cartridges. At noon of the third day they came back to the kraal, finger sore but triumphant, staggering under the weight of six old oil tins which had been cut and sealed into boxes to protect the bullets.

His mother was just calling the men of their family to dinner. Koos hungrily squatted down beside his father in the circle around the large three-legged iron pot of thick stew. His brothers, uncles, and cousins were already scooping out big handfuls of its contents and washing it down with "kafir-beer." Their meal over, they threw themselves down in the shade of the trees to sleep.

That same afternoon Babab came and ordered Koos' father to take the whole kraal to the water hole near Chief Christian's pontok. And so for the second time Koos saw the two silent horsemen guarding the man who stood for the law and order of the tribe.

Not pausing, however, at the cluster of huts near the water hole, they went on up one of the stony little kopjes

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that overlooked the valley, the hilltop of Guruchas. Here they joined a thousand other natives — men, women, children of all ages — who had found, in cracks of the brown rock, shelter from the expected bullets of the white soldiers. Kapitein Morris called together the fighting men. Koos, at Babab's elbow, listened while Morris appointed certain iduanas to guard roads leading to the four other water holes, certain ones to guard the cattle at the precious water hole below Guruchas, and others to stay on the hilltop with the women and children. The Kapitein ended his instructions with a short, stern reminder.

"Remember that these white men shoot so straight as to kill even the swift springbok in flight," he said. "But if you keep hidden in the kopjes, and protect the water holes, you can hold them back for three new moons!"

Not many hours after that, the white men began to close in on the water holes. Koos and Babab and fifty fighting men were hidden on Guruchas, to protect the women and children. In the rapid exchange of shots as the soldiers advanced toward the water hole below, Babab was badly wounded in the shoulder, but the fighting tribesmen still held the hilltop.

On the afternoon of the second day, coming toward them from the north, Koos saw in the sky what looked like two black locusts, far more huge than any he had ever before seen, even during the plague. They made a queer buzzing noise, like the flies that bite after rains.

In less than five minutes there was a terrific crash of thunder, and a great shower of splintered rock and dirt fell so near that Koos was almost caught under it. He sat up in terror, forgetting all danger of bullets. Babab feebly pulled him down. Soon a second crash, and another shower of rock splashed over a near-by kopje. Then a third, and this time, screams of women and children.

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Then Koos discovered that the crashes of thunder were not coming from the sky but from something those great black locusts threw down on the kopjes. In a panic, he called to Babab. His uncle lay with his eyes closed and made no answer. Koos, thoroughly frightened then and feeling desperately alone, buried his head in his arms and began to shake with sobs.

For three hours the terrible "locusts" circled watchfully about in the sky, although very little more noise came from them. When friendly night dimmed the hills, they buzzed away. Here and there on the kopjes, figures crawled out of hiding from behind the crags and boulders, and soon a hundred men were gathered around Kapitein Morris, as he rode up to them under cover of the darkness.

"We cannot fight," they said to him beseechingly, some of them still shivering with fear. "Give us white men on the ground, and we will fight till we die. But we cannot fight these witches of the sky!"

Morris, surveying them with keen eyes, nodded in despair. "Disband your men!" he sharply commanded the iduanas. "Let a white flag of truce be shown to-morrow; the white men will be kind. But let all the fighting men who will follow me to the mountains, come; they and I will not surrender."

Accordingly at the next dawn the Great White Iduana saw a ragged patch of white waving against the brown hillside. Down from the kopjes came the four hundred women and children who had been in miserable hiding, and the white soldiers made count of three hundred kraal men, but Kapitein Morris and some five hundred of his fighting men were not among them. Koos was there and his wounded uncle. An officer, seeing how badly hurt Babab was, ordered the boy to take him home. A man from their own village offered his donkey and helped his uncle to mount. Slowly and painfully they covered the long miles back to their kraal.

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For two days he did his best to care for his uncle, who was out of his head and talking so wildly that Koos was half afraid to stay alone with him at night in the dark hut. Then, while the straggling, starving natives came back in small groups to the huts, a white lieutenant and a red-haired doctor rode up to the pontok where Babab lay.

"Call an ambulance," the officer said briefly to his orderly, after looking the sick man over. Then he turned to Koos, who eyed him suspiciously. "This man will have better care at our hospital than you can give him here, boy. He'll be all right in a few weeks."

While they were putting Babab in the ambulance, Koos got up enough courage to ask the one thing he wanted to know. "Is our Chief Jacobus Christian killed?" he asked the red-haired man.

The doctor looked at him sympathetically. "No, he's not killed. He's a prisoner, captured after a stiff fight."

"And Kapitein Morris . . . did he reach the mountains?"

"Morris was killed; he was a brave chap," the man answered.

Koos turned his back. The motor ambulance started up. And then he stood alone under the gum tree, watching them take Babab away. What an end to the hopes of the tribe! They had lost the fight; their true chief was captured; and the tribe itself would probably be "broken" in punishment worse than before. Koos turned into the pontok, utterly discouraged.

Matters soon grew even worse. A few days later, word was passed around the kraals that Chief Christian must sit in the jail house for five years. There arose in the tribe a sullen defiance to the white man, and a more serious unwillingness to work. Worst of all, a famine and drought set in.

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Months of despair followed. Most of the flocks that had not already died or been eaten perished now of thirst. The Catholic mission on the reserve began to give out doles of "mealie meal" to the poorest, but there was much sickness in the kraals.

The red-haired English doctor who had taken Babab to the hospital, and who had brought him back with his wound healed, came frequently to the village with his black bag. Koos sullenly watched him as he lanced boils, administered medicines and attempted to talk to the old men and women in the Hottentot language, with its queer clicking sounds.

One day a lamb in Babab's flock broke its leg, and Koos sat trying to bind it up. All at once he felt a tap on his shoulder, and a voice said:

"Twist the rag like this, son." Long, white fingers reached down and straightened it so deftly that the little animal raised its head. Koos stubbornly kept his face turned away from the doctor, but as if not noticing it, the man went on: "There's a boy in the kraal next to you who has an arm broken much like this. I'm renewing his bandages to-day. There — I'll look in on the lamb to-morrow. Tether it so it won't stray. Cheerio!" And he was off.

Koos sat under the gum tree, watching him ride down the dusty trail. He was burning with curiosity to see the other boy's arm.

The next day he followed the doctor's horse until the doctor turned in his saddle and saw him. The third day Koos stood shyly at his stirrup as he mounted. "Baas," he said hesitatingly, "baas . . . master . . . may I see you bind that boy's arm?"

"Right-o!" cried the red-haired man cheerfully. "Swing up here." He patted his horse's haunches. Koos vaulted

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up behind him. The ride to the kraal was a silent one, but Koos said to himself, two or three times: "This white man I can like."

A new sort of unspoken partnership arose between the two as the months went by. Finally Koos, as a sort of servant-assistant, left his father's hut and slept in a small room in the doctor's house in the city. The next rainy season came, but no rain. Instead, white clouds of locusts, eating what few tiny blades of grass and leaves braved the African drought. The poor became poorer, and the cattle even on the white men's farms died of thirst. Koos had never imagined there could be so much suffering. Sometimes he was allowed to help the doctor, who went from kraal to kraal, hardly taking enough time to sleep.

During these frequent rides he had confessed to the "baas" the long grievances his tribe had against the white man. "It was not fair — those buzzing enemies in the sky," the boy said resentfully one blistering hot day.

A sudden cloud came over the man's face, as if Koos had rebuked him. "Perhaps not," he answered gravely. "But if you had not surrendered when you did, and we had not used those 'sky locusts,' there would have been hundreds of broken heads that not you nor I nor any 'baas' could mend. We of the South African Union, who have promised to protect you, thought it necessary."

The word "promise" made Koos look at him in astonishment. "A promise you gave?" he asked. "To what great chief would you have to give a promise?" He could not imagine who could be greater than the white iduanas to the south, who had conquered those to the north, and who did with soldiers and laws as they pleased.

The doctor looked at him thoughtfully. "It is a story to tell to your kraal," he said after a pause. "It is right that you

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should know. To-night at moonrise I will speak to them at the thorn tree by Babab's hut."

When the doctor arrived at the old meeting spot, some thirty or forty natives were squatting about. What had seemed so simple to him in the thinking, however, was more difficult in the saying. Koos watched the man dismount, throw the bridle over his horse's head, and pace up and down a moment before he joined them. The ragged Hottentot boy, loyal as he might be, could not know that in the heart of the red-haired doctor certain great ideals of the brotherhood of man were fighting against a deep-seated pride of empire — a pride which had made him and his race rulers of hundreds of thousands of men not their own color.

"It is not a long story," the doctor began with a squaring of his shoulders. "Many days' journey beyond the deserts to the north and across a narrow sea, white iduanas come from many countries every year to sit at a meeting in a great stone pontok. Nine of these iduanas are especially asked to look after the welfare of your tribe and others like you, scattered far under the sun. No one iduana is wiser than any other of them, but the wisdom of nine is greater than that of one. It is to the nine that we talk of you.

"Now, it happened at the time of the last spring rains that these iduanas and many, many others, came to hear of Kapitein Morris' rifles, and the airplanes — those 'sky locusts.' It was a black man from a little island far away, a dark-skinned brother of yours, who rose up in this council of chiefs and said it was not right for us to have used those airplanes. So the council of chiefs asked these nine iduanas to find out why it had been done, and what we of the South African Union planned to do about it. The nine asked their questions and they were not entirely satisfied with the answers."

The doctor again unconsciously squared his shoulders.

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"Our Great White Iduana of South Africa was angry, then. But we had already made to those in the north a promise which Koos knows — that, until your children's children are wise enough to make laws for you, we of the South African Union will care for you in the name of all these iduanas of other lands, as we would care for our own children."

"Would you keep your own son in the jail house?" a toothless old man muttered with a touch of bitterness.

"I certainly would not!" the doctor answered vigorously. "I'd set him to work out here dosing your sick babies!"

Koos snickered and everybody laughed. With a grin of relief, the doctor rose and whistled to his horse.

"One of our white officers from South Africa is now talking with the nine iduanas," he ended. "Perhaps they can help us out of some of our troubles, for it is no easy thing to govern the Mandated Territory of Southwest Africa! It is the hope of all the council of chiefs in the great pontok, that the nine iduanas and our office will work out a plan that will be a help to all of us, not only now, but in the years that lie ahead."

"There is only one help our tribe needs," Babab remarked sadly.

"I know," the doctor replied simply, vaulting into the saddle.

Koos dropped his eyes as the doctor looked at him. Even though he loved the red-haired man, he could not forgive him that his chief was still sitting in the jail house. Three more years to wait until the sentence was ended — and even then he would never be allowed to be their real chief, for the tribes to honor. Truly, the tribe was still waiting as it had been waiting for years.

But it ended, even as the doctor had hoped it would. The nine white iduanas, known later to Koos as the Permanent

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Mandates Commission, sent its wisdom of nine added to the wisdom of one.

Koos was making tea for the doctor early one morning when his younger brother appeared panting at the door of the doctor's house. "Babab calls you," he jerked out.

The doctor's eyes twinkled as Koos asked permission to go. "I've been expecting that," he smiled. "Do not hurry back, my son."

The boys swung into the low, swift native trot. Where the trail divided within the reservation, Koos was surprised that his brother chose the fork leading not to the kraal but to the village where the white superintendent lived. Nearing the village, he suddenly raised his head and sniffed the air. There was an odor of roasting meat on the wind. Soon they reached the collection of thatched huts. Hundreds of natives surged around, sniffing also and beaming.

"The whole tribe is here!" thought Koos, passing families from the opposite edge of the reserve. Soon he spied great circles of dancers shuffling round and round to the rhythm of the drum. Koos felt his mouth begin to water as he saw four great oxen roasting over glowing beds of red coals. In front of the superintendent's house he saw a large space being cleared for some sort of meeting.

What could be the reason why famine, and locusts were so forgotten? What great thing were they celebrating? Surely it could mean but one thing — could it be that Chief Christian was free?

"Where is Babab?" Koos demanded, seeking his father.

"Coming." A man pointed down the road Koos had just traveled.

Squinting his eyes, Koos made out a great crowd of men advancing, some on foot, a few on donkeyback, and a central figure on horseback, whom they were escorting. As they

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neared the village, group after group of dancers and onlookers thronged to the side of the road, and a shout began that swept over them like wind over tall grass. Straight to the cleared space the procession came and the door of the superintendent's bungalow opened. Across the veranda and down the steps came the new superintendent, to meet the central figure on horseback who was dismounting in the clearing. It was the same slightly stooping man Koos had seen that moonlit night two years back! Thousands of brown eyes were glued on him as the tribe pressed as close as it dared.

Raising his hand, the superintendent said to the newcomer in a loud, clear voice: "Jacobus Christian, I greet you in the name of the white iduanas over the seas, to whom your people are as their own children. I welcome you back to your tribe. Now I ask you this question. If the Great White Iduana of this territory causes you to be known again as Chief of the Bondel Hottentot tribe, will you swear to follow his wishes and to be a true and loyal friend?"

"I promise him," Koos heard Christian proudly reply. "If the iduanas of my tribe will be loyal to me, their chief, I will be loyal to our Great White Chief." He turned to look at his people.

A suppressed sound of approval began to rise in the eager circles.

"Men of the Bondel Hottentot tribe," asked the superintendent, facing the throng, "the past is forgiven and forgotten. Will you obey your own true chief?"

The suppressed sound burst into a great roar from a thousand throats and the tribe as one man crouched in the attitude of salute to a ruler.

"Hail, Chief!" they thundered.



"Hail, Chief!"

RED CURTAINS IN A SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLE

"Hi! Juan!" The shrill call came down a hot, twilight-darkened jungle in Paraguay late one November afternoon. Juan Faria, wearily trudging homeward behind his father's bullock team, recognized his small sister's voice. It cheered him; he raised nearly sightless eyes toward the sound.

"Lola! Ven aqui!" he shouted back. He wanted her to join him, for even her chattering nonsense would be better company than his own unhappy, vain longing to go down river on the rafts with his father the following week. That river trip! It was taken every year when the rainy season had raised the levels of the rivers so that it was safe for lumbermen to float their logs down the Paraguay River to be sold in Asuncion. Ever since Juan could remember, he had dreamed of going as one of his father's punteros on this hundred-mile journey southward.

It was true that he had known for months and months that he would become blind before very long. The film growing over each eye had first made everything look blurred; finally, he had lost all sense of color — green tangle of jungle that ringed their two-acre rancho clearing, and scarlet, blue, or yellow of countless birds. But all this time Juan had been preparing himself, teaching himself to do things by touch, rather than sight. By now, he could be trusted to hoe the maize and dig the mandioca roots, milk the six cows, and drive the two

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bullocks which hauled the lumber from the forest to the little rio near by that flowed into the Paraguay River. This year he was twelve years old, and even his father had said that the river trip might be a possibility.

So now for the last two weeks he had cheerfully skinned his knuckles and stubbed his toes, guiding the hulking old bullocks back and forth over the picada, or trail, which led from the lumber clearing to the edge of the rio, where his father and three older cousins were gradually squaring each cedar log into shape as a railroad tie. This afternoon they had just finished squaring the first ten. Carlos, Miguel and Ferdinand, the cousins, had lashed these ten together with rawhide thongs to three cross poles, making the first of the eight rafts which would presently be set adrift in the slow but resistless current of the Paraguay River, to float with their punteros aboard down to Asuncion. With a tremendous push, they had launched this first raft, just to watch it take the water.

Then came the catastrophe. Juan, told that he might pole the raft back to the bank, where its nose would be drawn ashore to await the other seven, waded out, clambered upon it, and facing his cousins cautiously but proudly shoved its bulky mass straight ahead until he felt it ground on the bank. Unluckily, he took a step backward on the raft to feel for the little black felt hat he had thrown down beside him, and as the result of a misstep, he found himself standing waist-deep in muddy-tasting water, warm mud oozing through his bare toes. His cousins had hooted with laughter, but his father, giving him a hand up, called Juan immediately to one side, and put the whole question of the river trip to him point-blank.

It seemed that there were small, man-eating fish, the piranha, that traveled in schools in the river; one puntero, five



Juan longed to go down the river on a raft.

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years earlier, had been attacked by them while he was in swimming, and had been bitten to death before he could be rescued. Besides the piranha, there were reed-choked lagoons where guide poles became entangled and lost, as well as hidden mud banks, from which it often took hours of sweaty, hard work to pole the rafts free. This called for sure and quick footing on slippery wood. It was plain to Juan, long before his father had finished, that there would never be any place for him on the rafts.

The boy pluckily would not let his cousins see his disappointment, but now that he was alone on the trail homeward, so far ahead of them that their voices hardly reached him, he felt lonely and discouraged beyond words.

Then came Lola's shout to cheer him. It brought the idea of supper and of his mother standing on the veranda of their little thatch-roofed house, waiting for her family. Juan loved his mother rather especially, because she had showed him how to grind corn in the mortar, bake bread, and do much else both in the house and the garden. He liked the whole rancho, for that matter. He was beginning to understand what it meant to protect the hard-won meadow and farm against the jungle, particularly against those long, clutching vines and bushes that grew almost overnight. Every few months his father had to hack the crowding mass of green back with his machete, the small, sharp South American hatchet that every jungle dweller carries in his belt. Juan himself had just been given a machete of his own, which he had hung on the wall of his room, and used on rare occasions with his father.

Lola pattered up to him and thrust a warm hand, sticky with juice of the orange she was eating, into his.

"A strange man has come to our house," she confided, batting at the clouds of mosquitoes that always swarmed out from the underbrush after sunset.

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Juan was instantly alert. Strangers were rare, and usually interesting. "Who is he?"

"His name is Señor Stevens. He hitched his horse to the mulberry tree where the clothesline is."

"Stevens?" repeated Juan. "That's not Paraguayan. What does he want?"

"He asked mama if he can sleep in our house. He has a black box tied to his belt." Lola guided Juan's hand in a gesture outlining the size of box it was. "It takes pictures of birds and things for a story he is making."

That evening Juan and Lola drew up stools in front of the bench where the Canadian señor sat, smoking a strong native cigar while he exchanged stories with their father. Mother Faria sat by the lamp, mending Juan's torn trousers. More than once Juan felt the señor's eyes fixed on him, but he was too absorbed in listening to tales of oceans, rivers, cities, people, to feel embarrassed, as he usually did when he knew strangers were looking at him.

"I have a son just about the age of yours, sir," the stranger remarked abruptly. "This Jack of mine lives on a banana plantation I am developing up in our Canadian colony of Mennonites northwest of your town of San Pedro here, up in the Gran Chaco."

Juan's father seemed less interested in Jack than in the mention of the Gran Chaco, that Great Wilderness which, stretching for hundreds of miles of lonely marsh, campo and wooded monté along the western bank of the Paraguay River, lies like a "V" between the Argentine on the west and a still-undetermined border line on the Bolivian frontier to the north.

"That Gran Chaco makes a fine place for colonists," he observed.

"It's too bad that such a large section of it in the north is still disputed between yourselves and Bolivia, sir," Stevens

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remarked. "Over one hundred thousand square miles, isn't it?"

"We've had trouble with Bolivia over that land for a hundred years," Faria informed him. "Let them leave to us what is ours."

"But some Bolivia cattlemen who are developing a ranch near there tell me that it belongs to Bolivia, not to you," the other persisted.

"Señor" — Juan caught the note of impatience in his father's voice — "let Bolivia attack one single foot of Paraguayan territory. She will learn once and for all that it is not for nothing that our battle cry still is 'Vencer o morir!'"

"'To conquer or to die,'" quoted his guest thoughtfully. "Well, it seems to me, nevertheless, that it is a question for lawyers, not for soldiers. I'd like to wager that unless you get it settled soon, you will have bad trouble there some day. However, it's none of my business."

Lola, now sound asleep, was carried to her bed in her mother's room, and Juan, yawning after the long day's work, soon had to say good-night. As he went toward the door that led into his room, he stumbled over a leather bag which Stevens had unfastened from his horse's saddle. Mortified, the boy stepped to one side, and struck his elbow sharply against a corner of his treasured gramophone. As he blundered his way into his room, he heard the Canadian ask gently:

"Is that boy of yours blind?"

The next morning, as he returned from the spring with a pail of water, Stevens called to him from the veranda. There was something in the Canadian's voice that drew Juan. He felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and another hand tipped his face upward.

"Juan, I've done a lot of thinking since you went to bed. Suppose, in the first place, that my boy Jack was — well,

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was like you. God forbid! But the point of the matter is that my camera hunt can wait for a few days. I've a good friend, a Paraguayan doctor, in Asuncion, who may be able to give you back your sight. If your family is willing, how about going with me by the steamer that stops here to-morrow?"

Juan hesitated. It was too much like a dream. "Will I see?" he asked.

"Perhaps; no one can tell until the operation is finished. It may leave you blind, but I don't think it will. Will you risk it?"

Risk it? Risk it for the chance of helping take next year's logs down river? "Si, si, si, señor!" was the boy's breathless response.

The next afternoon he was leaning against the rail of the steamer beside Señor Stevens as the paddles churned the water against the small dock, shouting "Adios! Adios!" to his family. It brought a queer lump to his throat, for this was the first time he had ever said good-by to them all; moreover, Asuncion was a long way off, and it would be at least three weeks before his father would be down with the rafts.

One week later the postilion left a letter at the Faria rancho which sent Mother Faria to her knees in thanksgiving. Juan had been operated on for cataracts by Surgeon Ayala, the letter said, and although until the bandages were removed about three weeks later no one could tell whether his sight would be restored, nevertheless he was such a brave patient that his chances were excellent. Pedro Faria worked like a slave at his rafts that afternoon. Mother Faria started plaiting a new bamboo mat for the floor of Juan's room, and the next morning, balancing a basket of fresh eggs on her head, she hurried to the San Pedro market five miles away to sell the eggs and buy new curtains for her son's windows. The curtains should be red; that was his favorite color.

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But she came back with more than curtains. She brought news that made her recall the chance prophecy made by Señor Stevens of trouble in the Gran Chaco. To her husband, coming up from the rafts for lunch, she cried: "Pedro! There is war! Our Paraguayan soldiers have captured the Bolivian Fort Vanguardia, up on the Chaco frontier!"

"Caramba!" he exclaimed. Then the next instant his practical mind jumped to the rafts to be floated downstream, and his nephews, who were his punteros, but who were of age to be conscripted into the army reserve. "Has the call to colors gone out yet?" he demanded.

"Not yet." She hurried into the kitchen to dish up the potatoes and peas.

"Tell me the whole story," Faria requested as his wife seated herself opposite him.

It seemed, according to the Paraguayan story of it, that a Paragualan "columna" of cavalry and infantry patrolling the disputed territory, had come upon some Bolivians at dawn the day before, near a Bolivian fort but on the Paraguayan side of the line. The Bolivians had refused to withdraw, the Paraguayans opened fire, Fort Vanguardia, defended by a garrison of twenty-five, replied and was first captured and then burned to the ground.

"Our army sergeant in San Pedro is saying that the Bolivians were building a fort on the disputed land," Mother Faria ended. "He says he thinks they want to push farther south in the Chaco, to where the Paraguay River is deep enough to allow ships from the Atlantic to carry ocean-going trade. The leather merchant, however, says it is because there is oil in the ground. They both say that a captured Bolivian officer blames us for attacking; he says we agreed in 1927 with the President of the Argentine to settle it by law."

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"We certainly did agree to settle it by law!" Pedro Faria returned grimly. "Have they forgotten that even in 1925 Paraguay agreed to that in the Gondra Pact? But when they provoke us in this manner if Bolivia really wants to fight, there will be a bad war. Be not surprised, Emmanuela, if even we older men, the militia, are called out."

She looked at him, startled. "You? The older men? But . . . what will happen to our ranch if you go?"

Her husband looked out of the window. Juan would be no match for that hungry mass of jungle pressing steadily against his small home. He shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"And if Carlos and the others are called to the colors, who will bring Juan home to me?" Juan's mother insisted with tears in her eyes.

Faria rose from his hardly tasted meal. "Emmanuela, prepare four bundles of food, and get ready the lanterns," he ordered. "My nephews and I shall complete those rafts to-night if we have to work till sunrise. We must start for Asuncion with the logs before the boys are called; they can join the army down there."

It was a weird night. Mother Faria, swathed in mosquito netting to protect her from the ravenous mosquitoes, sat on the river bank, faithfully tending the four small lanterns, occasionally refilling them with oil. At her feet lay four bundles of food and some poncho blankets. In the dim light the four men, heavily smeared with rancid alligator fat to keep off the stinging pests, constructed awnings over small platforms on four of the eight rafts, to serve as shelters during the blazing hot noontides. Then they lashed the rafts in twos and cut extra guide poles. Just before dawn they shoved off, and as the sun tipped the tall yerba trees on the eastern shore, they entered the broad, smooth-flowing waters of the

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Paraguay River and swung southward on the hundred-mile voyage to Asuncion and Juan.

The first craft they passed was the Paraguayan gunboat, the *Adolphe Riquelme*, steaming its way northward to the region of the disturbance. Carlos gaily waved his black felt to the sailors standing on the small stern deck where three gray cannons were mounted. Those were his colors floating from the mast, the three-striped flag, red, white and blue, with the yellow lion and scarlet liberty cap in the center of the white.

As the days went on, they saw different kinds of craft, particularly balsas or small, home-made barges, laden with cargoes of bright-colored fruit and vegetables bound for the Asuncion market also. But no one they saw could give them further news. The hours seemed endless to Faria, thinking alternately of his son to the south and his wife, small daughter and rancho to the north. He knew both countries had signed pledges not to settle their differences by fighting, but it seemed impossible to him that Bolivia should remain quiet after this attack.

On the ninth and last night of the voyage, his worst fears proved true. He was keeping watch, about midnight, while his helpers, rolled in their ponchos, slept. Brilliant stars were reflected in the black water all about him. A jaguar on the shore had savagely ambushed a carpincho that had come down to drink and the quiet that followed the agonized squealing of the luckless water hog seemed ominous.

Suddenly Faria was aware of a ship's engines ahead. Then a long row of lights appeared to the left and ahead of the rafts, and on the warm wind came the sound of a guitar and men's voices singing. The steamer, headed northward, came abreast of Faria. Both her upper and lower decks seemed crowded with sleeping men.

"Who are you?" Faria hailed them.

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"We're infantry! We're going to the Chaco front!" shouted one of the singers lounging in the bow.

"What news?" Carlos had jumped to his feet, wide-awake at his uncle's voice.

Somebody played a strong flash light on the raft.

"You'll be joining us soon, brother!" yelled a voice. "The Bolivians have captured our Fort Boqueron in revenge, and they've bombed Bahia Negra from the air! The call to colors has gone out in Paraguay to all but the militia. 'Vencer o morir!'"

The three nephews cheered wildly.

"Hi, confrères!" shouted somebody else. "Give them the national anthem again!"

Across the black waters, as the lighted ship receded into the night, swept the ringing chorus,

Paraguayans, onward to liberty or death!

Through Valor only, Freedom can remain!

Neither slaves nor tyrants can triumph in that land

Where true equality and union reign!

Juan Faria's father got no sleep that night. When they drifted, the next afternoon, into the long, deep bay on the eastern shore of the river, where rose the beautiful capital city, Asuncion, he signaled impatiently to one of the many small tugs to tow them down to the lumber yard. Leaving his nephews then to seek out the army headquarters and report for enlistment, he set out to find the Public Hospital where Juan lay in a darkened room waiting patiently for him.

Juan, all these days since he had said adios to his family, had resolutely tried to obey Surgeon Ayala's orders to keep quiet and happy. When the first tumultuous news of the

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Paraguayan capture of Fort Vanguardia arrived, he had asked Señor Stevens if it was near his son Jack.

"Even if it is, I doubt if there will be actual fighting," his friend replied lightly, explaining both about the League of Nations with whom each country had signed pledges not to fight and to whom each of them had sent reports of the trouble, and about a Pan-American Conference just then opening its meeting in Washington up in the United States, whose whole purpose was to draw up plans to prevent just such wars among the American countries. He did not add, however, the disquieting reports that the Bolivians seemed to be getting ready to avenge the "insult to national honor," which they considered the capture of their fort to be.

Juan was therefore quite surprised when, nine days later, he heard hurrying feet of hundreds of people passing beneath the hospital windows, going toward the Government House. Soon after lunch bursts of occasional shouting, a band playing the military marches, and groups of excited students singing the national anthem, sent him groping his way from his easy chair to the window to listen to the noise with fast-beating heart.

Fort Boqueron had been captured by the Bolivians! All Paraguay's regular reserves except the militia had been called for defense!

Stevens found him sitting beside the window. "Juan, I'm going up to Jack," the man said briefly, his hand on Juan's shoulder. "You understand?"

"Si, señor," the boy replied instantly.

He did understand, but when the northbound steamer whistled as it pulled away from the customhouse dock that afternoon, he felt an unexpected stab of loneliness.

The next morning he woke to hear Surgeon Ayala talking to the nurse at his door. In another minute he knew by the

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man's tread as he entered the room that something was the matter.

"Tell me what it is, señor," he said simply, sitting up in bed.

"There is danger that Paraguay is in for war," came the explanation in a quiet voice, "even though she accepted the offer of mediation which the Pan-American Conference telegraphed five days ago to both us and Bolivia. The trouble is that Bolivia has not accepted it yet, in spite of a cable from the League of Nations urging us not to fight. Therefore, since we must prepare for defense, the call to colors has gone out, and I, as a doctor in the reserve, have been ordered to proceed with the troops to-morrow."

Juan's lips tightened to a straight line, but he listened quietly.

"I have told my assistant surgeon what to do about your eyes," Dr. Ayala went on. "The bandages can come off in three days. Can you be brave, alone, till then?"

Juan's hand sought the warm one of the man. "Si, señor," he promised steadily. "And will I . . . see, then?"

"I *hope* so, Juan. Understand me, I *hope* so. Your father will be here with you by then."

For an hour after Juan was dressed, he sat silently thinking in the chair by the open window. The nurse twice asked him what troubled him, but he would not tell her. It was not the thought of his father — he was a man and could look after himself. It was anxiety for his mother, Lola, and the rancho. He was recalling stories his grandmother had told him of the terrible five-year war during her girlhood, when people, in starvation, had had to eat dried cattle hides and dead mules' flesh; when they drank river water and sometimes caught fever from it; when they crept back, after it was all over, to their forsaken ranches, to find the trails overgrown, man-eating jaguars stalking their human prey openly from

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house to house, and four-fifths of the entire population of the country perished. Juan was old enough to realize that the same thing might happen again — and that he would be of almost no use.

Suddenly he heard a man's voice down the corridor, arguing with an attendant. "Not visiting hours yet? What do I care? I came to see my son!"

"Father!" cried Juan, springing up from his chair. A minute later his arms were tight about his father's neck, and he was asking rapid questions about home. "Will you have to go to the army?" he interrupted himself.

"Not unless Bolivia refuses mediation," his father answered, "and I don't think she really will refuse, for she is honorable, even if she is our enemy," he ended honestly. "But tell me, when do your bandages come off?"

"Only three days more!" Juan exclaimed. "But Señor Ayala will not be here to know about it . . ."

Three days meant Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday dragged by. When Wednesday came, Juan for the first time in his life was thoroughly nervous. He walked restlessly up and down, paying no attention to the extraordinary commotion in the streets, and very little to the conversation going on between his father and the assistant surgeon. That League of Nations Council, which Señor Stevens had spoken of, had evidently sent a five-page cablegram to each of the war-preparing countries, urging them to keep their armies out of reach of each other and to accept offers from some American body to make peace between them. The assistant surgeon further explained that the cablegram also reminded them that the League would have to use the blockade or other punishment against either country that broke its pledges to the League.

All at once Juan pricked up his ears. A new voice had joined the talk. It was saying:

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"I think that cablegram, as much as anything else, was the thing that finally persuaded Bolivia to accept the Pan-American offer of mediation. It also seems to me that the most important fact about that cablegram is that we South American countries who belong to the League realize that, even though it meets across the ocean, it can help us over here. And it shows, too, that the League acknowledges the coöperation of our own Pan-American Union!"

Juan could wait no longer. "Señor Ayala!" he exclaimed, walking toward the voice.

"Back again!" laughed the voice as a hand gripped his. "They have no need of me since Bolivia ordered her armies to retire."

"Oh, señor, *I* need you!" Juan replied with a catch in his voice.

"We'll fix you up right away," replied the surgeon instantly. He immediately sent the nurse for two attendants. They came in with heavy cloths which they draped over all the windows in the room except that which faced the south; over that they hung two strips that just met the middle. The surgeon pulled Juan's father to one side.

"When they open those curtains, watch Juan's head," he whispered to Faria. "If he holds it toward the light, that will be certain proof that he sees."

The attendant led the boy to a chair in the center of the room. There was perfect silence while the surgeon loosened the bandages about the erect young head. Then he motioned for the southern curtains to be drawn slightly apart, until a golden dart of sunlight found its way into the room. The bandages fell to the floor.

Pedro Faria, watching breathlessly, saw his son's head turn slowly to one side and then to the other. Finally it stopped, looking toward the light.

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Two afternoons later the father and son, over whose eyes the bandages had been replaced, left the steamer that had brought them home. As they drove carefully up to the rancho, Faria whispered: "Your mother is waving to you."

Still a long way across the campo, Juan waved his hat wildly in reply. "Mother!" he shouted, "I can see!"

A few minutes later they were walking through the familiar little house, arms about each other, Lola pattering alongside, somewhat awestruck. The sun had just set, and the lamps were still unlighted. The boy could hardly wait for his father to unpin the bandages.

"This is your room," his mother said as they crossed a threshold.

"There's a new mat on the floor!" Juan exclaimed, conscious of the plaited bamboo under his feet. "Where's my machete?"

Feeling the wall for it, he hung it in his belt. Then he could not stand the suspense any longer. Pin by pin, the gauze was loosened, and fell unheeded at his feet. Slowly he turned to the soft light that came in through the window. Walking over to it, his fingers touched the curtains.

"Why, they're new!" he cried. Then, as an afterthought, he held them to his eyes. "Mother!" he cried excitedly. "Mother, they're red!"

♦



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BRUCE, fourteen years old, a square-shouldered, blue-eyed son of Kentucky, was pacing Deck B of the *Ile de France* with his mother. The trim French liner, east bound from New York, had left America behind her and was headed out into the tremendous sweep of the Atlantic. Bruce, for whom it was the first trip to Europe, loved the slow lift and dip of the ship as she encountered the ocean swells, the clean salt tang of the breeze off her starboard quarter, and the expanse of sapphire water with little wind-blown crests of white foam. It was the horizon that fascinated him most, however; something surely lay beyond its clear-cut rim, calling him.

"I know why Dad stays in the navy!" he exulted to his mother. "He just naturally can't leave the ocean!"

"Your father is in the navy to defend our country," she corrected him cheerfully. "The very reason his destroyer is in

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Chinese waters this blessed minute is to defend Americans out there."

"I reckon that's so," her son agreed after a minute's thought. "By the way, Mother, did you know that we have a real celebrity on board this liner? He's in one of the suites on our own deck. The cabin card outside his door says 'Secretary of State of the United States of America.'"

"Really, Bruce?" his mother exclaimed. "I wonder where he's going. I declare, I've been so busy in my studio that I've lost track of nearly everything going on in the world. Perhaps we'll see the gentleman in the dining room to-night."

After they left the deck, Bruce tiptoed to the suite to read the card once more and be sure he had not read the French wrongly. To his surprise, the card with the imposing title had been removed, and another put in its place. This second card read simply: "Frank B. Kellogg." That didn't sound important enough. Bruce decided to hunt up a steward and find out why it had been changed.

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders. "What would you?" he replied to Bruce's inquiry. "Monsieur the Secretary insists that he is just a plain man and does not wish titles. And yet what a great journey this is that he is taking!"

"Great journey?" Bruce was puzzled. "A vacation?"

"Vacation! Mon dieu! Where have you been? Figure yourself! Is it a vacation when a man carries to Europe the first treaty which your rich and powerful United States has ever been willing to sign, condemning war?"

At the word "war" Bruce became alert. That was his father's profession, so to speak. "Who says we condemn war? Whom are we going to sign it with?"

"You go to Paris?" the steward inquired.

"For a month, to visit Aunt Louise and Cousin Pierre."

"Then you will see for yourself who will sign. Fourteen

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nations, mon enfant, fourteen powerful nations have accepted your American invitation to sign in Paris this Peace Pact, which our own Monsieur Briand has wanted for so long. Figure! And then I hear that forty-nine more will be invited also to sign."

"Why, that's about the whole world!" his listener ejaculated.

"Certainement. Now, listen; if you would attend a spectacle merveilleux, you must go in Paris to our Foreign Office in the building called the Quai d'Orsay, just nine days from now, on August twenty-seventh. There you will see the seals of fifteen countries placed on this promise never to start war. Me, I fought the Great War in a submarine in the Mediterranean, and I know what war is like. I am thankful that your Monsieur Kellogg and our Monsieur Briand have written this Peace Pact. Do not forget the twenty-seventh, then."

It was exciting to think of living almost next door to such an important thing as that treaty. Very often during the next five days Bruce and his mother caught sight of the quiet, rather tired-looking white-haired gentleman and his wife who occupied the suite marked by the modest card. Sometimes the Secretary of State was lounging in his steamer chair; often he was pacing the deck, sometimes with another passenger, whom Bruce discovered was no less a person than Prime Minister Mackenzie King of Canada. They were evidently talking very seriously.

The thoughtful young Kentuckian, watching them from a distance, wondered why they were so anxious to condemn war. He himself had always thought it was necessary — bloody, of course, but with its good points; else his honest and clear-minded father would never be willing to risk his life by being in the navy. It made Bruce begin to question himself why he thought war was necessary, and to his surprise, he found he

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had already formed several opinions, but had never put them together. For example, he had taken a course in General History at Longwood Academy the winter before, which had shown him that usually a war was started when a nation had an army or navy strong enough to get what it wanted. Contradicting those facts was the argument which Bruce had heard several times that the bigger the army or navy, the more sure one was of peace. Then there was his mother's plea that self-defense was necessary, and that was why his father was commander of a destroyer.

It came down to the question of his father's opinions on one side and the Peace Pact on the other.

Bruce, puzzling over it one night as he stood looking at the moon, first felt it was disloyal to his father that he should be questioning his father's beliefs at all. But then he realized that the main thing his father had always asked of him was to think things out for himself. Well, there was a lot of thinking to do in this case! And there was the ceremony of signing the Pact which might give him some pointers. Bruce was determined to be honest with himself.

On the sixth day of the voyage the ship docked at Havre, a port on the northern coast of France. Bruce's last glimpse of the white-haired gentleman was as the latter was being escorted away from the dock by a group of city officials headed by the Mayor of Havre.

"They will make a little ceremony in the City Hall and present Monsieur with a pen of gold given him by the city," the steward said as Bruce neared the gangplank.

"I'll think of you when I see him sign the Peace Pact with it," the boy laughed.

The Frenchman shot him a quick look. "Think not of me, I am alive! Think of those who died in the war! If there should be another war like that, there would be no

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one left to think of! That is why your Monsieur Kellogg goes to Paris, and why the others meet him there."

Bruce walked down the gangplank in a serious frame of mind. Aunt Louise and Cousin Pierre were waiting and led the way through the bustling crowd. A little later as they took their seats in the Paris Express, Aunt Louise spoke of Secretary Kellogg.

"You couldn't have come to Paris at a better moment, Marie!" she exclaimed to Bruce's mother. "We're just wild with excitement over this Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact. It's the most stirring thing since Woodrow Wilson was here nine years ago. Permission to see the signing?" She turned to Bruce. "Dear boy, literally thousands of persons are besieging every embassy for cards of admission, and only seventy-five can be granted. Suppose you let your mother and me use the two Uncle Raoul was lucky enough to receive, and you let Pierre show you the room and the building beforehand? There's an interesting old footman there named Jules who has been in four wars. He will answer all your questions, I'm sure."

So on Monday the twenty-seventh Bruce and Pierre ate an early lunch and hurried across the Pont de la Concorde to the Quai d'Orsay. Even before noon—and the actual signing was not to take place until three o'clock—there were hundreds of people outside the big stone building. Pierre, grasping Bruce firmly by the arm, pushed his way through the crowd and marched confidently up to one of the gendarmes guarding the entrance. He said something in French, and Bruce was much impressed when the man waved his hand for them to enter.

Soon they found Jules. The old head footman in his carefully brushed dress uniform looked the boys over as he listened to Pierre's question.

"The ceremony will take place in the Salle de l'Horloge,"

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he responded, and walked slowly ahead of them to a large door.

"Voilà!" He threw open the door and gestured toward a large, silent salon, beautiful with carved panels and crystal chandeliers. The boys stood still, gazing eagerly about.

Under the elaborate mantelpiece, whose large round clock gave the room its name, stood a very large, U-shaped table with fifteen armchairs placed around its outer side. A second table, quite small, had been placed in front of this; then began the closely placed rows of chairs for guests. Eight great spotlights stood here and there close to the walls, and a movietone camera, which Bruce would have liked to examine.

"It's the first time that a movietone camera will ever be used in recording an important historical event," Pierre explained with pride.

"What is that?" Bruce asked, pointing to a heavy, squarish metal box on the small table, so plain in contrast to everything else.

"That," replied Jules, "is the inkwell used here in Paris one hundred and fifty years ago when Monsieur Benjamin Franklin crossed from America to sign the first foreign treaty of friendship that your infant United States ever signed."

"You must have seen a lot of interesting people here," Bruce suggested.

"I do not remember Monsieur Franklin," the old footman replied with a twinkle in his eye. "But I have ushered prime ministers, presidents, kings, into this building to put their names to famous papers. And, ah, mes enfants, what splendor of dress we have seen here! Gold lace, plumed hats, velvet breeches, such glory of color! To-day they will wear civilian suits, out of courtesy to your fashion of democratic Amérique."

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Bruce glanced openly at the veteran's medals. "I am glad you are not in civilian suit; I think those medals are beautiful," he remarked. "Monsieur Jules, do you like war?"

"War is abominable," the old soldier replied promptly, closing the door and leading them back to the street entrance. "The army is fine, yes; but war is abominable. I wish there were no war."

"But for self-defense?" Bruce persisted.

"Self-defense, yes. But who knows what self-defense really is?" The veteran shrugged his shoulders. "Suppose an army is so strong that its people forget and use it to get back a city, or a lost colony, or food, or oil? Will the rest of the world believe, then, that the army was used in 'self-defense'?"

Bruce, deep in thought, followed Pierre out into the bright sunlight. Hundreds of people had gathered around the building while they two had been inside, and the boys stayed close by the steps to watch the delegates when they should arrive. It was about half-past two when Bruce's mother and aunt appeared and were admitted.

A little before three, an automobile with the Japanese coat-of-arms drew up along the curbing. Count Uchida, the Japanese delegate, stepped out, looking not at all weary after his fifteen-day journey from Tokio across two continents. He paused as another gleaming limousine followed.

"That's the American Embassy car!" Pierre whispered quickly. "That's the same one that Lindbergh rode around in when he landed in Paris in May last year!"

"And that's Secretary Kellogg getting out of it!" Bruce returned with a flush of pride and pleasure at the sight of his kindly faced neighbor of the *Ile de France*.

As Count Uchida followed Secretary Kellogg up the steps, a third automobile arrived, out of which a sick-looking man

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stepped carefully. As he walked slowly but firmly up to the entrance, someone behind the boys said in an undertone:

"He is Dr. Gustav Stresemann, the German representative! He's the first German Foreign Minister that Paris has entertained since the Franco-Prussian War fifty-seven years ago. They say he has just had a bad case of influenza."

The other delegates arrived almost immediately, and in a very short while a clock somewhere struck three. Bruce gave an involuntary shiver of excitement as he pictured the fifteen men filing into the Clock Room and taking their places in the fifteen chairs, with the spotlight shining on them and the movietone camera ready to begin. The huge crowd out in the street cheerfully awaited their return.

Someone began speaking in English near the boys, and Bruce looked up instinctively. It was an English officer talking with his wife.

"Well, war is not dead," the officer was saying thoughtfully. "But this Treaty is one of the world's greatest declarations for peace, as our delegate says. But how are we going to get it working? It's all very fine to say we will not fight, but we have made certain promises to the League of Nations that we will help blockade a country that breaks its peace treaty with the League, and here's the sticking point: suppose the United States, being a neutral in such a case, insists on her right to trade with the enemy, and we are forced to seize her ships? What will her navy do to us?"

"Don't say anything!" Pierre whispered swiftly to Bruce. "You don't know how to answer him."

"And then there's her Monroe Doctrine, which keeps our warships out of South American waters even if our nationals are endangered by a revolution," the officer went on. "The problem can be worked out, of course, but we've got a bally lot of straight thinking to do."

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At the same moment Bruce caught a few words of another conversation going on at their other side. Two American students were arguing about the need to reduce both armies and navies, now that the Peace Pact was signed.

"President Coolidge said, not three weeks ago, that this Treaty does not touch our navy! The British admiral said practically the same thing, and the French are planning to launch more submarines this fall," one was arguing.

"We're just half way between two things — settling troubles by war, and settling them by peace," his friend retorted. "If this Treaty means anything at all, it means that we've got to give war a funeral!"

"We're learning more than if we were in there!" Bruce said in a low voice to Pierre. His own thoughts were very busy on the matter of what he really did believe, himself, and he was rapidly coming to a definite conclusion.

It seemed almost no time at all before the ceremony was over and the delegates and guests came down the steps to their automobiles waiting to take them to one of the many receptions Paris had planned for their entertainment. Bruce's aunt and mother collected his cousin and himself, and took them home to tea.

"What did the delegates promise exactly?" His mother repeated his question over her teacup a little later. "Well, here goes, Bruce. This is the way I understand it.

"At the beginning of the Pact three reasons are stated as to why they want to sign it: they believe it is their duty to promote the welfare of mankind; they are convinced that war should never be used 'as an instrument of national policy' (that is, selfishly, and if any nation does so use it, the others have the right of self-defense or to help the one attacked); they hope that every nation on earth will unite in the same treaty.

"Then come the two main parts of the Treaty. First, they

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condemn war, and promise not to use it to settle difficulties with each other. Second, they agree that the settlement of absolutely all disputes among them shall never be sought except by peaceful means — discussing things directly, you know, Bruce, or taking the trouble to an international court, or asking a third party to talk it over with them. As soon as the proper legislative body of each of the fifteen countries whose delegates signed to-day has approved the signature of its delegate, the Treaty will be in force and open to the rest of the world.”

Aunt Louise passed her a plate of small cakes. “Will the Senate ratify it for the United States when they assemble this winter?” she asked after a pause.

“I hope so, but . . . well, I am not sure,” her sister replied thoughtfully. “I don’t know how much of America has made up its mind that it wants it ratified.”

Bruce stared at his mother in amazement. “Not even when we made it in the first place?” he queried.

“The Senate usually expresses the will of the majority of the people,” his mother answered, “if the people want a thing strongly enough. The point often is that not enough people really make up their minds as to what they want; they just imitate somebody else’s ideas and do nothing about it.”

“Well, I know mine,” Bruce remarked promptly. “I’m going to write to Dad to-night and tell him he’d better write to all his friends to get their senators to vote for the Treaty!” He stopped abruptly, for he was not sure how his mother felt.

“I think he will do it, and so will I,” she replied unexpectedly. “Why don’t you write our senators, too, Bruce?”

Almost five months passed. Bruce was halfway through another year at Longwood Academy. He had made the football team and was out for his basket-ball letter. Studies and athletics had kept him so busy that he hardly ever glanced

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at a newspaper. He had completely forgotten that Congress was in session.

Therefore it was a total surprise to him when, on Sunday, January 20, he found a great headline standing out on the front page of the Sunday paper. It read:

SENATE RATIFIES KELLOGG-BRIAND ANTI-WAR PACT

In the picture section was a whole page of photographs, one of which had been taken in the Clock Room in Paris while the white-haired Secretary of State was putting his name to the parchment. Opening the newspaper on his knees, Bruce bent eagerly over it. Finally he straightened up and looked out at the snow-covered campus, trying to recall something. Then he went to his desk and rummaged for the diary he had kept on the European trip.

Pasted neatly in place were two clippings taken from an American newspaper the day after the signing. One was the list of signatures affixed to the Pact of Paris. Bruce read them over, seeing in his mind the delegates as they had arrived in front of the Quai d'Orsay.

Frank B. Kellogg	(United States)	Liam T. Cosgrave	(Irish Free State)
Gustav Stresemann	(Germany)	Cushendun	(India)
Paul Hymans	(Belgium)	G. Manzoni	(Italy)
Ari. Briand	(France)	Uchida	(Japan)
Cushendun	(Great Britain)	August Zaleski	(Poland)
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C. J. Parr	(New Zealand)		
J. S. Smit	(South African Union)		

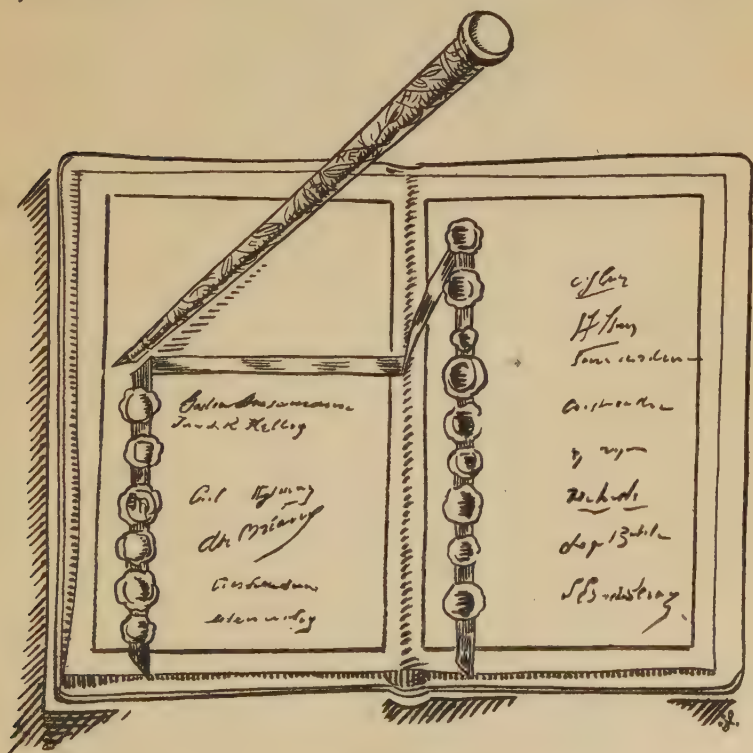
PEACE IS PROCLAIMED

The other clipping was Briand's memorable speech, the only one made, at the ceremony of August twenty-seventh. With serious eyes the boy glanced over it.

" . . . It will be, I hope, no exaggeration to say that to-day's event marks a new date in history making. . . . Such a treaty is a beginning and not an end unto itself. . . . Peace is proclaimed. That is well; that is much; but it still remains necessary to organize it. . . . That is to be the work of to-morrow. . . ."


" 'That is to be the work of to-morrow.' 'A new date in history-making.' " Bruce's mind flew back to the letters he had written to his Kentucky senators.

"Jiminy!" he exulted. "Think of helping to make history yourself!"



EDITOR'S NOTE: The stories in this volume are all based on actual incidents in the League's history. Since these incidents naturally occurred at different times, there is one apparent contradiction in the facts cited, which is however only apparent. The story of "Mimi and Ernst" is based on the reconstruction of Austria, the beginnings of which were made in 1922, at which time there were only 52 member States in the League of Nations. The incidents described in "Cease Firing" are part of the Greco-Bulgarian dispute, which occurred three years later, in 1925. At that time there were 55 member States, as mentioned in the story.

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